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President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin, His Excellency Mr. Edgar-Yves Monnou.

Mr. Monnou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): You have the difficult and noble task, Sir, of guiding the work of the General Assembly at a time when the United Nations is celebrating 50 years of existence and approaching a decisive turning-point in its history. Your election to this high office is cause for joy and satisfaction in the delegation of Benin, on behalf of which I have the great honour of speaking from this world-renowned rostrum.

I am pleased to be able to add my voice to those of preceding speakers in congratulating you sincerely and warmly and also in congratulating the members of your Bureau. I am particularly glad in that you represent a country, Portugal, with which Benin is honoured to have excellent relations and valuable cultural ties. It is my belief that your experience and your qualities and abilities will help to ensure smooth proceedings and success here in our discussions.

You, Sir, are taking over your office from my brother Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, to whom I would like to extend the satisfaction and appreciation of my delegation on the exemplary manner in which he presided over the work of the forty-ninth session. In an international situation marked by doubt, fatigue and an absence of resources, he endeavoured with lucidity, resolve and perseverance to reconfirm the central and irreplaceable role of this Organization in attaining peace and social progress.

I would also wish fraternally to extend a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whom I welcome here with us today, a man of conviction and humanism whom we should support and recognize for his efforts and initiatives to translate into action the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Our world has changed considerably, and the wheels of history continue to turn inexorably, throwing up their share of upheaval and change, which makes even clearer the need for a universal forum and an instrument as valuable as the United Nations. It has asserted itself as an essential catalyst for international cooperation based on interdependence and an awareness of the common future of mankind.

The ceremonies commemorating 50 years of the United Nations give us an opportunity to evaluate what it has done. I shall confine myself to just a few points.

There is a saying in my country that whenever we hesitate about how to proceed in life, we should look

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back over the road we have travelled. So, in that context, I would like to recall that there should be three pillars supporting this Organization, namely: the maintenance of peace and security; economic and social development; and respect for and protection of human rights.

I think I am right in saying that, since 1945, peace has in general been maintained. Most States have now gained their sovereignty and their peoples are exercising their rights, and the fundamental nature of respect for human rights has been universally recognized.

Yet, there are such deep cracks in the second pillar that the whole building may crumble. Hence the United Nations is now at a critical turning-point in its history.

In a world in which economies and markets are being globalized, a world that is almost entirely characterized and united by the communications revolution and the progress made in transport, we soon realized that peace does not simply mean that weapons are silent. Increasing interdependence has not really created a genuine feeling of solidarity. Although this is often said — some of us speaking before the international community every year from this rostrum — it has not prompted collective action to ensure prosperity for all.

The three pillars that symbolize the authority of the United Nations and its ability to carry out its mandate must all be strengthened if the building is to continue to stand.

I did not mean to turn my back on Benin's tradition by allowing myself to turn the thoughts of this Assembly towards symbolism, but rather to highlight the reality of the problems we face and the scope of the challenges they throw down before us. Human dignity is what is at stake here.

The United Nations can become stronger only by strengthening its second pillar, by promoting action in economic and social areas, by focusing its concerns on development in order to achieve or maintain peace through the promotion of social development.

The Organization therefore has a central role to play in preventing mankind from drifting towards new confrontation and impoverishment, and in enabling man to gain greater control over his environment and his fate.

The new dynamic in international relations resulting from the end of ideological confrontation is characterized by a search for a new kind of inter-State relationship. As a result, the hotbeds of tension and conflict that have not been quelled are now approaching a solution or are being contained. And yet, there is still such upheaval in some parts of the world that international peace and security are being threatened.

I am thinking here of the negotiations between Israel and Palestine. They are the result of resolute action. We know how difficult was the road leading to the establishment of lasting peace in view of the level of distrust and the acute, accumulated suffering involved. Yet, we have high hopes that bitterness and fear will be overcome so that dialogue may continue. We must all encourage dialogue between Israel and the States of the region, and to that end, the good will of all is essential.

In Benin, we welcomed the fact that the weapons had finally fallen silent in southern Africa. For the first time in several decades, the region seems to be able to devote all its energies and resources to development activities.

Here, we wish to pay tribute to the maturity of the people and leaders of Mozambique who have helped to establish a State based on the rule of law and political pluralism on the basis of free and democratic elections. I can only congratulate the United Nations on what it has done to promote peace in that country. We are all concerned that peace should be strengthened through stability, reconciliation and national reconstruction. Faced with this situation, the international community must, more than ever before, support Mozambique by providing assistance that can recreate an environment conducive to economic development.

I also welcome the agreements signed at Lusaka between the Government of the Republic of Angola and UNITA, and on behalf of my delegation I should like to encourage them to live up to the commitments they have made.

The positive developments in Haiti are also most welcome. Benin applauds the reinstatement of the legitimate Haitian authorities and the courage and sense of responsibility shown by the President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who has engendered a spirit of reconciliation. We appreciate the efforts made by the Government of Haiti to strengthen democracy in the country by establishing institutions following free elections. We have high hopes that security and stability can thus be re-established and will help to promote economic and

social development, the only guarantee of lasting democracy.

Unfortunately, however, in other regions, the course of history is still not running smoothly. This is the case in Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and Liberia, where events would seem to suggest that the protagonists have learned nothing — but they have forgotten nothing either.

In Somalia, the absence of any viable State structure has plunged the country into an impossible situation with momentous consequences. The desire to secure advantageous negotiating positions through the use of force has led to continued suffering for the country. In expressing our sympathy for the people of Somalia, Benin wishes to remind the various factions that they must create the conditions for dialogue and national reconciliation and we would urge them to be tolerant.

In Rwanda and Burundi, re-establishing the judiciary and establishing public order would seem to be the only means of putting an end to the spiral of violence and encouraging national reconciliation, which is a prerequisite for establishing trust and encouraging the voluntary return of refugees. We cannot deny that the slow pace and the fragility of developments in the situation in those two countries raise fears that the tragic events we so recently deplored may recur at any moment.

In Liberia, we welcome the new situation that has emerged from the cease-fire and the establishment of the Council of State. We urge all parties to strengthen the renewed peace by effectively disarming all the factions.

The former Yugoslavia is undoubtedly the world stage on which new types of conflict and efforts to limit them are running at the same time. While taking what may seem a dispassionate look at the situation in the Balkans region, we are not insensitive to the fate of millions of women, children and elderly people who are the victims both of new kinds of exclusion and of the irredentism of the peoples of the region.

I should like to take this occasion to reiterate that Benin strongly condemns "ethnic cleansing", no matter who its perpetrators may be, all violations of humanitarian law and all attacks against United Nations personnel.

Benin supports the idea of a comprehensive settlement with respect to the consequences of the disintegration of the former Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. For this reason, I appeal to all the protagonists to put an end to the fighting and to attacks against innocent civilians.

The New York agreements of 26 September 1995 between the three major protagonist groups constitute a decisive step towards general and lasting peace in the region, which, I trust, will soon cease to be the powder-keg of today's world.

The deplorable, indeed tragic, situations that I have just described strengthen my conviction that the protection and promotion of human rights and of fundamental freedoms still deserve our full attention. They justify the drafting of new international instruments to complete the existing legal arsenal, so that those who continue to perpetrate cruel and inhuman acts, genocide and "ethnic cleansing" can be punished. In this spirit, Benin supports the establishment of international tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

But what will all these efforts mean if we do not put an end to the production, accumulation and international transfers of weapons, and if we do not progress towards general and complete disarmament under international control?

In this connection, Benin reiterates its unwavering support for all United Nations resolutions relating to the reduction, limitation and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

One of the mandates of this Organization is to make general development efforts the focus of our concerns. Changes in international relations and the liberalization of trade have made us more aware of the many different sectors and players involved in development. The deterioration of our environment has alerted us to the need to focus our behaviour and actions on ensuring the long-term development of future generations.

We are both witnesses to and players in the changes we are experiencing today. And yet we are not unequipped to implement the transition to another kind of development, because we have at our disposal the tools for both diagnosis and prevention. There is only one possible approach: the political will to implement our respective commitments.

I should like to emphasize that as concerns implementation of their commitments the developing countries in general, and Africa and the least developed countries in particular, have proceeded resolutely towards

qualitative political and economic changes. In so doing, they have required enormous sacrifices on the part of their peoples in order to readjust and adapt to new world conditions.

We must acknowledge, however, that the commitments to carry out the duty of solidarity have not yet materialized. Benin, of course, fully appreciates the international community's support for the developing countries, and particularly for Africa and the least-developed countries in general. However, the assistance provided is far from meeting either the needs or the expectations.

I sincerely hope that the results of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least-developed Countries for the 1990s, which began here in New York on 26 September, will make it possible to overcome these shortcomings.

I urge the international community to live up to its commitment to solidarity with Africa by contributing to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. At the high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council held in Geneva from 4 to 6 July last, the international community reconfirmed its commitment to contribute effectively to the development of Africa and to the implementation of this New Agenda.

It is therefore urgent — and this cannot be said often enough — to reduce the debt burden to a level that would enable us truly to set development in motion. I should like also to invite all States to speed up their respective constitutional procedures for ratifying the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.

The demonstrations organized worldwide at the time of the first World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought bear witness to the commitment of peoples and Governments to tackling seriously this worldwide environmental problem. This commitment must be backed by the depositing of the 50 ratification instruments needed for the entry into force of the Convention in 1996. The first conference of the parties could thus take place in 1997, the year earmarked for the mid-term review of Agenda 21 and of all the recommendations and conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Measures must also be taken to speed up the integration of Africa into the international trade system and to help in diversifying economies and encouraging investment. Only in this way will that continent, which has suffered greatly throughout history, be able finally to emerge from the hellish cycle of poverty.

Benin is prepared to contribute to making 1996, the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, an occasion for us to strengthen the moral obligation and duty of solidarity that underlies the struggle against poverty. But our Governments' actions can be successful only if they are supported by all our partners in development.

The year 1996 will also see the holding of the Ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), which is being referred to as the "City Summit". These two major Conferences, whose importance cannot be overemphasized, will provide to the international community an opportunity to assess the progress made in the context of the commitment entered into at Cartagena in February 1992 and of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. However, the preparatory committees for those two Conferences must focus on finding specific solutions rather than short-lived measures and recommendations.

I am convinced that development cannot be achieved simply by transferring one model of production and consumption from one region of the world to another. We must go beyond that cliché and base ourselves on a true partnership for development, in which responsibilities would be shared equally. For this reason, Benin welcomes the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Benin fully endorses the elaboration of an Agenda for Development with a view to the effective implementation of the programmes of action that have not yet been carried out.

In conclusion, I should like to express our firm conviction that this session of the General Assembly will make it easier for us to achieve a consensus acceptable to all on ways and means of revitalizing and strengthening the institutions and structures of the United Nations.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Ro-Myung Gong.

Mr. Gong Ro-Myung (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Leadership has never been more critical to this Organization, and we are most grateful for the able work of your predecessor, Foreign Minister Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, and of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

We stand at the threshold of a new era, a time of great peril and magnificent promise. The choices that we make in the coming weeks and months could rejuvenate the United Nations for a new century of cooperation and progress, or they could consign the world body to years of stagnation, decline, and irrelevance. Neither path is inevitable, and none of the United Nations shortcomings are irreparable. The choice is ours.

The world, like the United Nations, is in a period of transition and flux. Virulent local conflicts in several regions are being met with global cooperation to contain the violence, assist the victims and mend the political and economic fabric of the shattered societies. During this past week alone, patient and firm diplomacy has yielded encouraging results in the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia, two areas known more for conflict than compromise. In some places, however, gross violations of human rights and genocide are being committed, even as great strides are taken globally by way of strengthening international law and human rights standards, most recently through the Fourth World Conference on Women. As the fields of communications, trade and technology have expanded to global proportions, interdependence has become a fact of life.

In a world of change, no institution — least of all the United Nations — can afford to stand still. The world body, after all, is an experiment. Launched by leaders of vision, foresight, and courage at another historic turning point half a century ago, the United Nations has steadfastly stood for change through peaceful means, for cooperation over conflict, and for hope over despair. Today, we have been called upon to reinvent the world Organization to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, while we recommit ourselves to its founding, and enduring, principles.

There is little doubt that this is a time of testing for the United Nations, but really it is the Member States — all 185 of us — that are being challenged as never before. It is our collective will, commitment, and inspiration — or lack thereof — that will determine the fate of history's greatest experiment in international organization. Our responsibilities begin with paying our financial obligations in full and on time, but they run much deeper and wider. The Republic of Korea recognizes that the time has come for far-reaching reform in the way the United Nations conducts its business and structures its programmes. Korea gladly joins the many other nations to make this historic General Assembly session a time of reflection, recommitment, and renewal.

No dimension of the United Nations work has been more severely or dramatically tested than its far-flung peace operations. All of us owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women from 70 countries whose courage and fortitude have kept the hope of peace alive under the most difficult and trying circumstances. We have asked them to accomplish a great deal with very little. If the United Nations is to respond effectively to the new forms of conflict that threaten peace and human security in today's uncertain world, it is imperative that its peace operations be strengthened and renovated. We appreciate the ongoing efforts to enhance the preventive diplomacy and rapid reaction capabilities of the United Nations, both within and outside the framework of the Organization.

One of the most promising avenues for bolstering United Nations capabilities is the United Nations stand-by arrangement system, and I would encourage the broadest possible participation by Member States. Today, my Government reaffirms its decision to take part in the United Nations stand-by system and its willingness to provide some 800 men for this effort, including an infantry battalion, engineering units, medical units and military observers.

Since Korea's first participation in United Nations peace-keeping operations in Somalia in 1993, when it sent an engineering battalion to the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), it has dispatched a medical unit to the Western Sahara and military observers to both the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in Kashmir and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that next week a Korean bridging unit of engineers will arrive in Angola to take part in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

My Government is determined to expand its contributions to the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations at a level commensurate with our national capacity.

As one of the troop-contributing countries to United Nations peace-keeping operations, we feel a great deal of concern over the fact that the number of casualties among United Nations peace-keepers is sharply increasing and that their safety is frequently endangered.

We firmly believe that hostile acts against United Nations personnel, such as armed attack and hostage-taking, are absolutely unacceptable and should not go unpunished. While we appreciate efforts for the protection of United Nations personnel, such as the conclusion of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, we feel that it is the collective responsibility of all Member States of the United Nations to ensure the safety and security of United Nations peace-keepers.

The challenges before the United Nations, of course, are hardly confined to traditional security concerns. Unrest in many parts of the world serves to remind us of the economic, social and political roots of conflict. Uneven patterns of economic and social development are of particular concern.

On the positive side, despite a slight decline in growth since last year, the recent economic recovery of the developed countries and sustained growth in a large number of developing countries have helped boost the global economy in 1995. Economies in transition have shown encouraging signs of improvement. The overall economic situation in Africa has also made headway, albeit slow and modest.

However, developing countries, particularly those in Africa, require the assistance of the international community in their developmental efforts. Fostering a favourable external economic environment for them is essential. In this regard, my delegation believes that the debate in the Economic and Social Council on the theme of development in Africa this year was both timely and appropriate.

In strengthening its cooperation with developing countries, particularly with the least developed countries, my Government places primary emphasis on human resources development. We are implementing a plan, which was announced by President Kim Young Sam at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, to provide technical training for over 30,000 people from developing countries, particularly from the African continent, by the year 2010.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We welcome the fact that the issue of development is receiving renewed attention as a pre-eminent global concern. My Government is actively participating in the Working Group of the General Assembly on "An Agenda for Development". Although the primary responsibility for development falls on the individual Government, we believe that national development efforts also require the assistance of the international community.

In that spirit, we vigorously support the multilateral efforts to realize sustainable global development. As a follow-up to President Kim's announcement at the Copenhagen Summit of our intention to increase our official development assistance, we plan to enlarge our voluntary contribution to the operational activities of the United Nations by 65 per cent next year, and will continue such efforts in the coming years.

In our view, the Copenhagen Social Summit was a milestone, not only because it laid a sound foundation for international assistance and cooperation in the area of sustainable social development, but also because it charted a clear direction for future action.

Women's issues have also become a key part of the global agenda. My Government welcomes the recent discussions in Beijing on the enhancement of the status of women and looks forward to the full and early implementation of the plan of action adopted at the Conference.

The protection and enhancement of human rights are an enduring task. The inalienable and basic rights of human beings must be faithfully protected and preserved. As articulated in the Vienna Declaration, the primary responsibility for protecting human rights should be borne by the respective Government. However, it should also be noted that the cooperation and attention of the international community, including the United Nations, are paramount to the efforts in this field.

Since the inauguration of President Kim Young Sam in February 1993, the Government of the Republic of Korea has placed an especially high priority on the promotion of democracy and human rights. The Government has ardently supported the democratization

process and has successfully taken various reform measures to promote human rights in the country. I should like to take this opportunity to express my Government's deep concern over the human rights situation in North Korea. As my Government strongly believes that the people in North Korea, as our kindred, should enjoy the fundamental human rights to which all of us are entitled, we urge Pyongyang to respond positively to the international calls for the protection of human rights, especially through opening its society.

An outstanding and emotional dimension of this issue is the division of families on the Korean Peninsula. During the Korean War, in 1950 to 1953, 10 million people were separated from their families. Most were never to hear from each other again, because even the exchange of letters was prohibited between the two Koreas. Even after the war, hundreds of South Koreans were forcibly taken to North Korea against their will, leaving behind families grieving over separation and anguished by the uncertainty of whether the other members were still alive. I believe that it is high time for the community of nations, particularly the United Nations, to render its assistance and do its part for these divided families so that they may at least hear from each other until they are finally reunited.

Turning to the issue of disarmament, I would like to take this occasion to declare, on behalf of my Government, a one-year moratorium, which may be extended, on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. We hope that our decision will strengthen the international efforts to limit the proliferation of land-mines and to end their indiscriminate use.

Considering the continued importance of the Conference on Disarmament as a unique negotiating forum for disarmament, my delegation welcomes the decision on expansion of membership of the Conference, adopted by consensus at its plenary meeting a week ago. We hope that the countries of the Group of 23 that wish to participate in the Conference will be given full-fledged membership at the earliest possible date.

The Republic of Korea, as one of the original signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, has taken steps to ratify the Convention with a view to supporting the international endeavours to prohibit and eliminate all types of weapons of mass destruction. As we all recognize, universal adherence to the Convention is an essential step towards securing an effective non-proliferation regime in this area. The Republic of Korea therefore strongly urges those countries, including the DPRK, which have not yet joined the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

In our efforts to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by consensus last May was a watershed event. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their responsibilities under the NPT to make the world nuclear-free. In this regard, my delegation joins the call of many other countries for the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, a global agreement which would undoubtedly help facilitate the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons as envisaged in the NPT.

In the same spirit, it is deeply regrettable that some countries with nuclear weapons are still engaged in nuclear testing. On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Korea, I would like to urge those nations with future plans for testing to cancel them without delay.

My delegation strongly endorses the efforts to strengthen the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We believe that the future of the NPT also depends upon cooperation between States in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, we believe that the legitimate demands of the non-nuclear States to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be duly respected and that resolute measures should be taken against those States that fail to fulfil their obligations under the IAEA safeguards system.

The North Korean nuclear issue remains a paramount security concern for North-East Asia and the world. The Republic of Korea urges North Korea once again not only to comply with its NPT obligations and IAEA safeguards in a full and complete manner, but also faithfully to implement the Geneva Agreed Framework between the United States and the DPRK of October 1994. Furthermore, North Korea should live up to its commitments and obligations under the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is not just an issue affecting 70 million Koreans, but also a strategic issue with critical implications for the North-East Asia region and the world at large. Accordingly, we believe that the current armistice agreement must be kept in force until a permanent peace mechanism is set in place. With a view to dealing with all inter-Korean issues, my Government earnestly hopes that the North Korean leadership will

respond positively to our call for inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation.

As I noted at the outset, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides a unique opportunity for the international community to revitalize, strengthen and reform the United Nations system. To this end, a number of proposals, studies and reports have been put forward. My Government is closely following the constructive discussions which have been conducted thus far in the working groups of the General Assembly seeking ways to augment the effectiveness, efficiency and democracy of the Organization.

As for the Security Council, we are of the view that in reforming it account should be taken first and foremost of the need for equitable geographical representation in its membership and enhanced transparency and efficiency in its working methods. Given the utmost importance of the issue and its implication for other issues, we will remain flexible and open-minded to various ideas and suggestions and make due contributions to the process of consensus-building. We also believe that the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened, particularly in the area of operational activities.

On the financial aspect of the United Nations, it is alarming to note that the total amount of unpaid assessments is well over $3.5 billion. An effective solution to the current financial difficulties should be found in order to meet the increasing demands of the United Nations and to strengthen it. It is in this context that we again urge all Member States to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

In order for reform to be successful, however, it is crucial to secure a broad consensus among Member States. We must not forget that consolidated political will, mutual confidence and a sense of common interest and benefit among Member States are key elements in the process of reform. In this spirit, reform begins at home, in rededicating ourselves to the community of interests and principles that serve to unite the disparate nations of the world.

In three weeks, in this Hall, the leaders of more than 150 nations — three times as many as met in San Francisco a half-century ago — will reaffirm their commitment to the ideals and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As the nations and peoples of the world reflect upon what the United Nations has achieved in its first half-century and what it should aspire to in the years ahead, the Republic of Korea wishes to renew its determination to render full and unswerving support for the revitalization of the world body in the years ahead. We believe in the collective ability of nations to build a safer, more prosperous and just world, and we are committed to do our part.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Her Excellency Mrs. Lena Hjelm-Wallén.

Mrs. Hjelm-Wallén (Sweden): First of all I should like to welcome the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement being signed today in Washington by Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin. This show of reconciliation should be an example to parties in various conflicts the world over.

As the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, it is time to look to the future. The world is different. The end of the cold war, the spread of democracy, economic globalization, and the explosive growth of communications have led to far-reaching changes. Distances between people are shorter, national boundaries are more open and global interdependence is increasingly apparent.

Security is no longer primarily a military matter. Security also implies building confidence, justice and equal opportunities to achieve lasting and sustainable peace, both within countries and through closer cooperation between countries and peoples.

Such cooperation is needed at the regional and global levels. Further enlargement of the European Union would be a step towards a pan-European community for peace and security. We have a historic opportunity to create a united Europe, ultimately developing integration and cooperation to a point where war becomes inconceivable anywhere on our continent. In my vision, the European Union must be a genuine peace project, opening itself towards the rest of Europe and the rest of the world.

At the same time, major threats to human security are global. They must be met by global action. Thus, we must revitalize the United Nations system, and adapt the Organization to the new reality. We need an effective instrument for global cooperation — for peace and

security, for sustainable development, for justice and for a life in dignity for all.

We are more convinced than ever that, with 50 years of experience, the United Nations is an indispensable tool for achieving these goals. Fifty years of experience have strengthened our support for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

In pursuit of these goals, United Nations personnel all over the world are making major contributions. They merit our deep gratitude. We pay special tribute to those who have lost their lives in the service of the world community and we extend our sympathy to their families.

Appalling pictures of human suffering in Somalia, Rwanda and former Yugoslavia force their way into our homes. We see the United Nations humiliated. The apparent shortcomings of the world Organization have sown doubts about the feasibility of multilateral global cooperation. But the problems of the United Nations are in fact those of its Member States. They result from a combination of growing needs and expectations, on the one hand, and insufficient resources and a lack of political will, on the other.

Sweden's former Prime Minister, Olof Palme, developed this theme in a speech he gave from this rostrum 10 years ago at the special commemorative session to mark the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. He said:

> "Let us not make the United Nations the scapegoat for problems that reflect our own shortcomings. It is not the United Nations that has not lived up to us; it is we who have not lived up to the ideals of the United Nations. It is by improving ourselves and our policies that we can improve the United Nations." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 43rd meeting, p. 64)*

Let us not curse the dark but instead shed light. Let us draw lessons both from the more difficult United Nations operations of recent years, and the more successful ones — El Salvador, Namibia, Mozambique and Cambodia.

We have learned that we must take action at an early stage, before the catastrophe is a fact, before the genie of violence has escaped from the bottle. The United Nations Charter offers plenty of scope for preventive efforts. Action must be undertaken with the consent of the States concerned and their sovereignty must be respected. We appeal to Governments: in an internal conflict accept the assistance offered by the United Nations or by a regional organization.

Prevention is seldom glamorous. It does not make headlines. Long-term, often tedious, work, with the focus on the fundamental causes of conflicts, must be backed up by deliberate political support.

More resources must be earmarked for preventive measures. This is an investment that is needed if we are to avoid new tragedies. The Swedish Government is currently studying how to improve the United Nations capacity for early-warning and preventive action.

We have learned to focus on the security and needs of human beings. Our goal must always be human coexistence, irrespective of cultural, religious or ethnic differences. We must never confine ourselves to drawing up maps that reflect the realities of power politics. We must never accept the evil of "ethnic cleansing". If we do, we will ultimately threaten ourselves and our future.

We have also learned the importance of the principles of international law and respect for human rights. Humanitarian law must be defended and reinforced and war crimes investigated. For example, we must find out what happened to those who disappeared in Srebrenica and Zepa. By bringing war criminals to trial we will enhance respect for humanitarian law. Perpetrators of cruelty, rape and torture must be made to understand that they cannot act out their perversions with impunity. We support the international criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the Rwanda tribunal.

We have learned that a democratic culture provides greater potential for prevention and conflict resolution. Continued democratization within individual countries must be encouraged, underpinning a democratic international community. Sweden is honoured to be the host country of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), which supports democratization processes throughout the world. The work of IDEA will be a valuable complement to the efforts of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in this area.

We have learned that troops must be made available for rapid-reaction operations when non-military measures have failed. As a conflict begins to escalate, every hour is precious. The lack of well-trained and well-equipped

peace-keeping forces, ready to be deployed at short notice, may preclude successful action. Failure to achieve the proper execution of Security Council decisions due to lack of troops undermines respect for the United Nations. We welcome the efforts made — by Canada and Denmark for example — to improve the United Nations stand-by capacity. Sweden will contribute an international force to achieve this objective.

We have also learned that the Security Council mandates for United Nations peace operations must be more precisely formulated. Clear messages to the parties concerned are necessary. Unclear mandates may lead to ambiguous perceptions of the United Nations role in a conflict.

We have learned the need to strengthen the United Nations ability to command and control peace operations. We welcome the reinforcements of the Secretariat that have taken place. Confusion occurs when troop-contributing countries intervene in the field through direct contacts with their own contingents. An effective forum for consultations with troop contributors could add to more effective management of peace operations. Such a forum should be established under the Security Council, preferably in accordance with Article 29 of the United Nations Charter.

We have also learned that coordination of diplomatic, humanitarian and military efforts must be improved. Those who are to do the work in the field — humanitarian organizations and potential troop-contributing countries — should participate at an early stage in discussions on the implementation of mandates for complex United Nations peace operations. In this context, I would like to underline the importance of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

Further, we have learned the need to involve non-governmental organizations in such humanitarian operations. We have learned the value of comprehensive United Nations efforts in which humanitarian assistance, peacemaking, peace-keeping and long-term peace-building are carried out simultaneously, thus mutually reinforcing each other.

We have learned that monitoring respect for human rights can build confidence, thus allaying fears and preventing the use of force.

We have learned the vital importance of regional organizations for peace and security, as foreseen in Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is already playing a prominent role in conflict management in Europe. In other parts of the world — in Africa, Asia and the Americas — regional and subregional organizations are in a position to fulfil similar tasks, if necessary with the support of the United Nations.

Military operations should be based on decisions taken by the United Nations, the OSCE or corresponding organizations in other regions. Other regional arrangements may have a role in organizing and executing such operations, but the bodies I have just mentioned should assume overall political and strategic responsibility.

As we approach the twenty-first century, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations offers an opportunity to establish a solid basis for improved global cooperation. Sweden welcomes the reform process now under way in the United Nations. To embrace multilateralism we must all rise above short-sighted interests and focus on what is best for global cooperation. We need political leadership from Governments if we are to make progress.

Adapting the United Nations to the demands of the new era will involve hard work and difficult negotiations. We must not miss the opportunity provided by this anniversary. We need speedy progress. A clear timetable and a comprehensive framework are required for necessary change.

The Commission on Global Governance, under the chairmanship of Sir Shridath Ramphal and the Prime Minister of Sweden, Ingvar Carlsson, offers several proposals for a stronger, more efficient and more democratic United Nations. The Commission's report is a valuable contribution and a source of inspiration for United Nations reform.

In order to be effective and more representative, the Security Council requires enlargement. We would welcome Germany and Japan as permanent members. At the same time, the need for geographical balance must be met. We want a more transparent Security Council. We want a composition and a decision-making process which prevent the division of the world into spheres of interest. The reform of the Security Council should be reviewed after 15 to 20 years with a view to maintaining its legitimacy and to achieving optimum flexibility.

We meet at a time when the financial situation of the United Nations is critical. Last Monday the Nordic

Foreign Ministers, in a joint statement, highlighted the threat to multilateralism caused by the present financial crisis. Nowhere is the crisis in multilateralism seen more clearly than in the unwillingness of some Member States to pay their assessed contributions to the United Nations in full, without conditions and on time. It is unacceptable that so far only one third of the Member States have paid their regular-budget contributions for this year. Countries constantly demand more from the Organization, yet some of them are not willing to pay their membership fees. They apparently want others to foot the bill.

Unilateral withholding of payment cannot be justified. Unilateral measures undermine multilateralism, particularly when taken by the single most important contributor. It is humiliating to see the Secretary-General spend time and energy begging for funds when the world community is demanding that the United Nations concentrate fully on the tasks which it was designed for.

The United Nations needs revised scales of assessment to better reflect Member States' ability to pay. Together with the United Kingdom, my Government has presented concrete proposals to address this problem.

In the longer term, the resource base of the United Nations must be strengthened. The possibility of additional sources of funding needs also to be considered.

Poverty and social misery are the greatest long-term threats to international peace and security. Some of the poorest countries have been caught in vicious circles of debt management. The United Nations must be given a stronger and better-defined role in the economic and social fields.

A clearer division of work is called for in development assistance. Better coordination, more distinct priorities and more effective management by the United Nations development agencies are required. The governing boards of these agencies must be in a better position to play their leading role in the implementation of development assistance. Furthermore, we need improved forms of financing, with a higher proportion of assistance levied and negotiated in advance. More long-term planning of assistance is required, and the flow of funds must become more predictable.

Sweden continues to be one of the largest voluntary contributors to United Nations economic and social activities. We expect other donor countries to assume their responsibilities to the same degree. As regards total development assistance, it must be possible for most donor countries to reach the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product.

The United Nations is contemporary with the atomic bomb. Today we no longer accept living under a nuclear threat. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was an important step in the right direction. We urge those few States which have not yet acceded to the NPT to do so without further delay, thus making it clear to the world community that they renounce the nuclear-weapon option.

In May of this year the 180 States which have acceded to the NPT confirmed that the ultimate goal is to abolish nuclear weapons. International bans on chemical and biological weapons are already in place. It should be possible, if there is political will, to achieve within 10 to 15 years an agreement prohibiting nuclear weapons, thus making this threat to human existence a brief interlude in our history.

A comprehensive test-ban treaty must be achieved in 1996, banning all nuclear tests for all time. In the meantime, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from all nuclear testing in order to ensure that faith in a future free from fear of a nuclear holocaust can be sustained.

Every day, every hour, around the world, anti-personnel mines indiscriminately maim innocent civilians, many of them children. The ongoing Conference in Vienna to review the 1980 weapons Convention should result in a strongly and concretely reinforced regime against anti-personnel mines. This is a fundamental, moral and humanitarian imperative, and it is one step on the road to a total international ban on the use of anti-personnel mines. Moreover, substantial resources need to be invested in efficient mine clearance. Sweden is ready to contribute expertise and assist in the development of more advanced technology in this field.

Furthermore, at the Vienna Conference, Sweden has proposed an additional protocol on blinding weapons. For more than a decade we have worked for explicit prohibition of blinding as a method of warfare. We now hope that it will be universally accepted.

Security is a broad concept in today's world. We know that poverty, social injustice, environmental degradation, rapid population growth and massive refugee flows create fear, disruption and conflicts.

The major United Nations conferences on environment and development, human rights, population, social issues, women and human settlement all involved crucial questions of survival. We welcome the outcome of these conferences, the most recent of which was the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing. We need to address both the root causes and the consequences of social injustice. Sustainable social and economic development can be achieved only with the full participation of women.

To Sweden, multilateral cooperation is the most important instrument for mastering the crucial issues of survival. For this reason, we will continue to be an active Member of the United Nations. For this reason, we believe wholeheartedly that multilateralism is not only a matter of solidarity, but, indeed, a question of enlightened self-interest.

As an expression of our strong commitment to the United Nations and to international peace and security, Sweden is a candidate for a seat on the Security Council in 1997-98. Our candidacy is a matter of highest priority for the Swedish Government and the Swedish people. It has been launched with the full support of the other four Nordic countries. As a member of the Council, we will make a constructive contribution to its work. Our dedication will be consistent with our record as a United Nations Member. Our support for United Nations ideals and activities is concrete, substantial and unwavering.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic):* I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Ukraine, Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko.

Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine): I should like first of all to congratulate the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Freitas do Amaral, on his election to that high position. To guide the proceedings of the most representative organ of the United Nations in its jubilee year is a great privilege for a politician and diplomat, as well as for the country that he represents. We hope that his vision of the future of the Organization, contained in his opening remarks, will find support among Member States.

The delegation of Ukraine also expresses its gratitude to Mr. Amara Essy for successfully guiding the General Assembly at its last session. Many years of close cooperation have bonded me with Minister Essy, whom I highly respect for his diplomatic and human qualities.

In the historical calendar there are dates that can never be forgotten. The year 1945 is one such memorable time. Recently, we all commemorated together the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The calendar of international life is for ever interwoven with the half-century history of the United Nations.

In paying tribute to the founders of the United Nations, Ukraine among them, our delegation would like to note the leading role of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt — one of the initiators of the creation of the universal Organization and the author of its very name — the United Nations. We are confident that the United Nations can work out an appropriate way in which to pay respect to this outstanding person.

During the past half century the United Nations, as no other international organization, has acquired credibility as a reliable instrument for maintaining peace, as a mediator and active participant in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, and as a champion of human rights. The United Nations has played a decisive role in the decolonization and self-determination of peoples. The United Nations has proved its viability, having experienced the difficult decades of the cold war, when the walls and the rostrum of its Headquarters often witnessed the struggle of two opposing blocs. Ukraine — whose institutions of statehood were developing along with the United Nations and were fully established after the proclamation of independence in 1991 — feels the considerable support of the United Nations as well.

Witness the dramatic events of the past quarter of the twentieth century, the pinnacle of the philosophic triangle of "peace-development-democracy" is peace. And the most illustrative example of this is the tragic conflict in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. This conflict, by its very nature, is due to all possible reasons: militant separatism, ethnic confrontation, religious intolerance. The most dangerous thing is the fact that, in terms of its scale, developments and tragic consequences, this conflict has turned into a real threat to international peace and security. I think that for all of us, Members of the United Nations, the painful fact is that we are compelled again and again to return to this issue, even during the jubilee fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

United Nations peace-keeping operations in this region have revealed both positive and negative aspects of international efforts. The Yugoslav example demonstrates, in general, that rethinking the role of the United Nations and adapting the role to current realities are proceeding very slowly. Sometimes it seems as if the

Organization is continuing to live by the inertia of the old mentality, which does not allow it to use its potential effectively and makes it appeal to other organizations for help. Besides, we consider that most of the problems the United Nations is facing in the former Yugoslavia are rooted in the non-observance of at least a number of the major established principles of peace-keeping.

In particular, this may apply to the principle of impartiality. Thus, a review of the discussions in the Security Council and the activities of the Contact Group does not, unfortunately, give a sufficient basis for talking about real political impartiality in the positions of some of their members in regard to all parties to the post-Yugoslav conflict. As a result, international public opinion bases itself on a policy of dual standards and biased assessments and decisions, and this does not enhance the credibility of our Organization.

It is universally recognized that success in the final settlement of any conflict depends on the will of the belligerents and their readiness to engage in a dialogue and international mediation. At the same time, the consent of the conflicting parties to facilitate United Nations peace-keeping efforts was not always given. The taking of peace-keepers hostage by parties to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia makes us think seriously of the need to establish a comprehensive mechanism for the use of force and to enhance the protection of United Nations peace-keeping personnel. In this connection, Ukraine, which initiated the elaboration of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, calls upon all countries to expedite the ratification of this document.

At the same time, in spite of all the unprecedented difficulties and some miscalculations in conducting United Nations peace-keeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, we find it necessary to keep United Nations forces there. Accordingly, we should continue to seek means to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It seems that today everyone agrees that there is no alternative to a political settlement. We welcome efforts in that direction, particularly the recent intensification of relevant activities by the United States. We also believe that Russia can play a greater and constructive role in a peaceful settlement. For its part, Ukraine, as a major contributor to the United Nations Protection Force, is ready to continue its cooperation with the United Nations in this field. I would like to confirm that Kiev is ready, if necessary, to host a meeting of the leaders of the parties to the conflict with the participation of all the countries and international organizations concerned. The President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, has sent [illegible]ers with appropriate proposals to the leaders of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The process of settling the Yugoslav conflict could, in our opinion, be intensified by expanding the composition of the Contact Group and studying new approaches. As an example to follow, we note the international meeting on Bosnia held on 21 July in London, in which the delegation of Ukraine also took part.

While highly appreciating the considerable personal contribution of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the philosophy of peace-keeping, we consider that new approaches in this field require further practical development, in particular the principle of utilizing the rapid reaction force, which has already been quite actively involved in the former Yugoslavia.

The question of implementing the idea of establishing a United Nations stand-by force, in which Ukraine is ready to participate, is still outstanding.

We consider preventive diplomacy, which has demonstrated its potential in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to be one of the priority trends in the development of United Nations peace-keeping activities. In this context we are again proposing consideration of the establishment within the United Nations, and specifically within the Office of the Secretary-General, of a standing council of international mediators, whose membership would include internationally recognized and authoritative political figures.

Economic sanctions continue to be an important instrument in United Nations conflict-settlement activities. In this field, we believe it is necessary to elaborate a comprehensive and detailed mechanism for the implementation of sanctions which would also take into consideration all their potential consequences, including the negative impact on third countries. In our opinion, it has now been demonstrated that the embargo regime against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is counterproductive and has not attained the main objective of promoting peaceful settlement of the conflict. Ukraine considers that, along with the process of further political settlement, the Security Council should lift economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which, in real terms, has already demonstrated its willingness to assist in the restoration of peace. At the same time, we proceed from the premise that mutual and

simultaneous recognition of the States that emerged in the territory of the former Yugoslavia should be an important condition for the lifting of sanctions.

The principle that no single State or regional organization can be granted the right to be the main guarantor of peace and security in one region or another should continue to be a cornerstone of United Nations conflict-prevention and crisis-management activities.

Among the international community's undertakings in the past year we could list many important achievements which have become our common gains. Today, in Washington, the ceremony for the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement is taking place, and we want to congratulate sincerely both parties and all those who contributed to this achievement.

I would also like to dwell on one accomplishment which has significance for our country. The Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was undoubtedly the main event since the last session in the field of arms control and disarmament. It is symbolic that this Conference took place within these walls. Its decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty is really a historic achievement. I do not think it would be going too far to say that Ukraine's accession to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State, and our ratification of the START-1 Treaty and its entry into force played a substantive role in making this event a reality. Thus, Ukraine made its tangible contribution to the global cause — freeing mankind from the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction. The voluntary renunciation by the third largest nuclear State of this monster of the twentieth century is unprecedented.

The NPT is undoubtedly a key treaty among all the existing treaties on arms control and disarmament, since it provides an opportunity to consistently coordinate policies in the field of nuclear disarmament, allowing non-nuclear States to conduct a dialogue as equals with nuclear States. At the same time, I would like to emphasize that in Ukraine's opinion, in spite of the record-breaking number of NPT participants — 179 countries — we cannot regard a situation as stable when States that build their security on the possession of nuclear weapons and States that have never had or have renounced them exist alongside each other.

In this connection, Ukraine attaches great importance to the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. Unfortunately, the world community has not managed to mark the UN's fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations by concluding this treaty, but we share the hopes that the relevant talks will be successfully completed no later than 1996. In this context the necessity for all countries to observe the moratorium on nuclear tests is of special importance. Recent nuclear tests have aroused justifiable concern in the world. Such actions are not conducive to enhancing the favourable international climate that emerged after the end of the cold war.

The huge existing arsenals of conventional weapons and the danger they constitute for mankind put these weapons on a par with weapons of mass destruction and require the same close attention. As of today, Ukraine is fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. To support the initiative advanced by the General Assembly, the Government of Ukraine has declared a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines.

The course of the development of history has vividly demonstrated the interconnection and interdependence between the safeguarding of peace and security and economic and social development. In spite of significant achievements in this field, the present-day picture of the world is far from being ideal. Problems of unemployment, underdevelopment, poverty, social disintegration and isolation require urgent solutions. These problems are especially acute for economies in transition that are carrying out fundamental reforms.

Ukraine, which inherited a heavy burden of problems from the former USSR, is undergoing a painful period of radical political and economic transformation. Having laid the basic foundations of a democratic political system and civil society over the past four years, Ukraine has entered a new stage of development. Last October, the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, proclaimed a new economic policy based on the implementation of fundamental economic reform. Now, our main efforts are aimed at the further strengthening of democratic foundations, the creation of a socially oriented market economy, and the implementation of an open, predictable and consistent foreign policy. The reform of the State system of division of power is continuing. In contrast to most post-Soviet countries, we managed, without violent confrontation, to find a way out of the constitutional impasse. The important stage is ahead, namely the final drafting and the adoption of a new Constitution of Ukraine. A diversified system of external economic relations is being gradually established. The

process of integrating the national economy into the world economic space is being intensified.

At the same time, the Ukrainian economy continues to suffer from a crisis phenomenon. Having charted a course toward market reform and its rapid implementation, Ukraine must seek its own national model of market transformation. Today the establishment of an effective system of social protection is the Government's principal and most topical task.

The most important priority for President Kuchma and the Government of Ukraine continues to be the preservation of civil peace and inter-ethnic harmony in the country. In its four years of independence, Ukraine has managed to settle confrontational situations by peaceful political means. Ukraine's achievements in the field of securing the rights of national minorities are especially evident against the background of the numerous conflicts that unfortunately continue to be a reality in the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Ukraine's national legislation in this sphere has earned it high international marks, specifically from such authoritative organizations as the Council of Europe, of which Ukraine hopes to become a member this year. But, at the same time, we have problems in this sphere, particularly with regard to repatriating the deported Crimean Tatar people and representatives of other nationalities.

The Government of Ukraine has developed a large-scale national programme aimed at safeguarding the rights of national minorities and indigenous peoples and has established a fund for the deported peoples of Crimea. But for Ukraine, which faces conditions of economic crisis and a complicated financial situation and lacks the necessary infrastructure, services and mechanisms, the task of accommodating the hundreds of thousands of repatriated persons appears too complicated. Solving these problems requires a complex approach: the mobilization and consolidation of efforts at the national, regional and broader international levels.

In its international activities, Ukraine proceeds from the premise that stable development is a guarantor of lasting peace.

At present, when economic reforms in Ukraine are gaining momentum, we are especially interested in the widening of the activities of the United Nations and of its specialized agencies in the social and economic fields, aimed at establishing conditions for the integration of the Ukrainian economy and other economies in transition into the world economic space. The United Nations is an important instrument for promoting this process, and we appreciate the fact that the Members of this Organization show a deep understanding of the problems of countries in transition, including Ukraine.

We believe that creating internal preconditions for Ukraine's steady and gradual development has an international dimension as well. Ukraine's geo-political situation transforms its efforts to build an economically viable State into an important factor in promoting guaranteed peace, stability and security — including in the field of ecology — on the European continent.

It was this deep understanding of global interdependence that dictated, in particular, the political decision of President Kuchma to decommission the Chernobyl nuclear-power plant by the year 2000. Next year marks the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, which not only left deep scars on the lives of the present generation of Ukrainians, Belarussians and Russians, but also has a global perspective. We propose to declare 1996 the Year of the Commemoration of Chernobyl and to organize special activities under the auspices of the United Nations. On the eve of this tragic anniversary, I should like once again to emphasize that nuclear-safety problems and the decommissioning of malfunctioning and outdated industrial nuclear facilities are critical, and not only for Ukraine. We are convinced that the time has come for a practical solution to the entire series of issues related to the accident, especially in view of the long-term nature of its aftermath. The sooner we invest money in the solution of this problem, the sooner we will be able to overcome it, with fewer negative consequences for humanity. We expect that the international community's support of Ukraine's efforts will be directed not only at the decommissioning of the Chernobyl power plant but also at solving the whole cluster of associated economic, social and ecological problems. In particular, we would welcome wide international participation in establishing an international scientific-technological centre in Chernobyl.

At the same time, I should like to emphasize that Ukraine retains a sense of realism with regard to the capacity of the United Nations to solve our national problems. We do not aim to compete with the less developed countries for the limited resources of the United Nations development system. We are ready and willing to cooperate with all interested partners, and we

rely on the purposeful activity of the international community aimed at creating favourable conditions for expanding the access of Ukrainian exports to the world market. We expect that the World Trade Organization, which Ukraine is ready to join, will play an important role in the expansion and diversification of international trade and economic relations.

Recently the financial problems of the United Nations have had an acute political resonance. There can be only one conclusion: the existing financial system is incapable of guaranteeing the effective functioning of the Organization in the current situation and requires substantial reform.

We fully understand that the financial crisis of the United Nations has been provoked not only by political and economic circumstances but also by the imperfect system of apportionment of expenses, which is based on outdated principles. Ukraine will actively support the adoption of progressive changes to the methods of determining the scale of assessments and the special scheme of expenses for financing United Nations peace-keeping operations, with the aim of reflecting the principle of capacity to pay.

Ukraine's full participation in United Nations activities is impeded by its excessive contribution and its existing debt for financing United Nations peace-keeping operations. The State, which for the benefit of the world community has taken political decisions to voluntarily renounce nuclear weapons and decommission the Chernobyl power plant, should be able to concentrate its resources primarily on the implementation of those decisions. Ukraine, whose economy is undergoing an extremely difficult transformation and which is also suffering economic losses in the billions as a result of its strict compliance with the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, can by no means continue to be held hostage to the settlement of the financial problems of the United Nations.

The world is changing. The cold-war confrontation between blocs, as well as bloc discipline, has become history. The interdependence of States at the regional and global levels is increasing. Given the nature of modern international problems, we should be ready to face the challenges of the new era. We need a strong and effective United Nations. Its renovation should encompass both the structure itself and the character of its activities, in accordance with the requirements of the new epoch. In our opinion, a number of measures should be taken to democratize the Security Council's activity, in particular to increase the legitimacy of its decisions and the transparency of its work.

On the whole, Ukraine supports the activity of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council and hopes that the interests of all regional groups, including, I should like to emphasize, the Group of Eastern European States, will be taken into consideration during the reform process. Ukraine also supports the proposals related to the improvement of the activities of the Economic and Social Council. It stands for a reduction of the staff and the enhancement of the efficiency of the activities of the Secretariat, and for a reduction in the number of items on the agenda of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I should like to paraphrase a point of common wisdom: when you criticize the reflection in the mirror, you are criticizing yourself. The United Nations needs renovation — so we need to renovate ourselves. This Organization will not become more effective and instrumental unless its Members show enough eagerness for practical efforts. I would not want this Assembly in the twenty-first century to listen again to wishful thinking that is not backed by our political will and readiness to work hard.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic):* I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, Mr. Kozo Zoumanigui.

Mr. Zoumanigui (Guinea) *(interpretation from French):* It is a great pleasure and, indeed, an honour for me, to convey to the General Assembly the fond greetings of the people of Guinea, its Government and its President, General Lansana Conté, at the opening of this session, which so fortuitously coincides with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization.

The President returned to the Chair.

I am very pleased to extend to you, Mr. President, my warm congratulations on your brilliant election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Your election and the outstanding efforts by your country, Portugal, within this great family of nations, are a cause of satisfaction to my delegation. I believe that with your experience and your abilities as a great diplomat, you will guide our deliberations with great success.

I would join other delegations in paying a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy of the sister Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, whose dynamism and great qualities as a sophisticated diplomat helped us move forward as our Organization sought answers to the challenges facing our world today.

Also, I would here extend my Government's appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the enormous amount of work he has done and for the resolve and wisdom that he demonstrates in seeking solutions to all the fundamental issues, particularly those relating to peace, security, development and democracy throughout the world.

I should like to congratulate the people of Palau on their admission to membership in the United Nations as the 185th Member State. The presence of their delegation here with us confirms once more the universality of our Organization.

It is clear that the last few years of this century are being played out against a background of crisis and conflict, creating an impression of uncertainty as to the future of the human race. But we must recognize that the international community has made considerable efforts in preparing global strategies for peace and security throughout the world, taking into account the environment, sustainable development, the emancipation of women and the protection of children.

Despite these efforts, many parts of the world, sorely tried by poverty and backwardness, do not yet have sufficient food or enough drinking water, education or medical care. Civil war and natural disaster continue to endanger the economies of those same areas, which are already afflicted by a widespread world crisis.

Entire nations, such as my own, the Republic of Guinea, pay a heavy price because of their geographical location. More than 600,000 refugees and displaced persons from Liberia and Sierra Leone are now living in our country. The Republic of Guinea will never abandon its humanitarian duty to its Liberian and Sierra Leonean brothers, and continues to suffer the consequences of a fratricidal war which has lasted for six years in one of those neighbours and three years in the other.

It is true that relative calm, showing a clearer desire for peace in Liberia, has been noted since the agreements between the factions were signed on 19 August 1995 at Abuja.

In the view of my delegation, this new choice of peace in Liberia also requires a clear-cut effort on the part of the international community. In this connection, one has to ensure better control of weapons flows in the region. The Government of the Republic of Guinea is resolved to take action to that end.

Clearly, peace in Liberia will help to unblock the crisis in Sierra Leone and to establish in our subregion of West Africa an atmosphere of peace, security and lasting stability, which are all essential to our programme for economic integration.

My Government also welcomes the Lusaka Agreements and we support all the efforts being made to implement those Agreements with a view to ending the crisis in Angola. It is our belief that if the political will shown on both sides is sustained, then the people of Angola will come to know the peace and stability they have yearned for so long and will be able to work for national reconstruction and economic and social development.

Here we would pay tribute to the joint efforts made by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by the international community for peace and reconciliation in that brother country.

On the question of Somalia, my delegation deplores the current blockage in the peace process. We would urge all parties to the conflict to demonstrate wisdom and mutual understanding with a view to finding a peaceful settlement to the crisis.

Turning to Rwanda and Burundi, my delegation believes that to encourage major efforts by the international community, those involved in those societies must triumph over hatred, cultivate a spirit of forgiveness and promote love and dialogue.

Today, the conflict in the Middle East is on a positive footing. In this regard, the advent of Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, continuing negotiations for extending that autonomy to territories still under occupation, the Jordanian-Israeli agreement on borders and the Israeli-Syrian talks on the Golan are all significant advances that augur well for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question.

United Nations resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, on recognition of the border between Iraq and Kuwait and on the situation in Afghanistan should, we believe,

benefit from mutual understanding between those involved. The same holds true for the question of Western Sahara.

In the Korean peninsula, we are pleased to see an easing of tension. My delegation would encourage the North and the South to pursue their efforts towards the independent and peaceful reunification of their country into a confederated republic in keeping with the principle of one State, one nation, two regimes and two Governments. Moreover, my Government is pleased that the talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America have led to a negotiated solution of the nuclear issue on the peninsula and to an improvement in the relations between those two countries.

In the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the multicultural and ancient civilization, born of the contributions of diverse peoples throughout the Balkans, is being jeopardized by human fury. My delegation believes that what is happening there, and indeed everywhere, should remind the international community of its responsibilities for peace and reconciliation among the peoples and their component groups.

All the wars that are ravaging entire regions of the world today share, along with their countless dead, the phenomenon of an endless flow of displaced persons seeking, over mountains and through valleys, a place of refuge. Despite the international community's spirit of solidarity, refugees and displaced persons experience the very worst deprivations. These days, their problem has grown to unprecedented proportions of gravity and complexity. Their numbers have increased from year to year, making it ever more difficult to manage the problem appropriately. In my delegation's view, the crises that spawn refugees constitute genuine threats to regional stability and world peace.

Guinea, which is participating in the United Nations security mission in the Rwandese refugee camps in Zaire, in keeping with a framework agreement signed with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and taking account of its own experience with Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees, believes that no effort should be spared to calm extremism everywhere. That is why my Government supports all initiatives to strengthen the intervention capacities of the High Commissioner for Refugees. Guinea also supports the drafting of an agenda for humanitarian action along the lines of "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development".

Despite the end of the East-West conflict, nuclear weapons remain the greatest threat to international peace and security, in spite of the remarkable progress made in bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations. Many dangers still threaten our efforts to achieve a collective security that would include the related issues of development, environment and human rights.

In certain key areas, there is an evident and growing trend in the trafficking and use of chemical and fissionable materials in conflicts, as well as the hidden or overt desire of some countries to possess nuclear weapons. These facts represent dangers that increase the responsibilities of the United Nations, which is called upon to take rigorous verification measures.

That is why the Republic of Guinea welcomes the positive outcome of the New York Conference which led to the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This was undeniably an important step towards nuclear disarmament and confirmed the special responsibility of the nuclear Powers. However, if it is to be effective, this achievement must be complemented by the immediate conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. All nuclear tests must be prohibited.

It is obvious that this quick overview of the major concerns of our age — those relating to international security — amply demonstrate the importance today of United Nations peace-keeping operations. My Government therefore welcomes the special attention given by the United Nations to the settlement of conflicts in the world. We support the relevant views expressed by the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Peace.

None the less, while welcoming United Nations involvement in various theatres of operation throughout the world, we must also recognize that over the past few years the peace-keeping operations have, for the most part, yielded somewhat meagre results. This requires today, in the light of our experience, a reformulation of the entire issue of such operations.

If they are to be effective, peacemaking and peace-keeping operations must be the subject of broader agreement and dialogue among all the States Members of the United Nations, without discrimination. It is in that context that Guinea welcomes the establishment and work of the mechanism of the Organization of African Unity for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts in Africa. We urge the United Nations and the

international community to give it all the necessary assistance.

Economic and social development is a prerequisite of lasting peace and security. In developing countries, particularly in Africa, a sense of insecurity arises out of uncertainty in the future. It can thus be easily understood why we often see a collapse of political and social balances, leading to civil disorder and ethnic and religious conflicts.

Despite United Nations efforts in the economic and social field, the results remain meagre in some regions of the world, particularly Africa, which is still deeply affected by inequality, poverty and other serious problems that often weaken the social fabric and undermine the foundations of our States.

Recent trends in the world economy have helped to worsen this already precarious situation. Thus, the debt burden remains the main obstacle to development in poor countries, forcing them to devote a major share of their scarce resources to it. The collapse of the prices of commodities, which are their main contribution to the world market, has added to their poverty.

On top of these harsh conditions come the effects of the implementation, by some of our States, of structural adjustment programmes that are sometimes poorly prepared and often poorly implemented. If all of these various reforms undertaken by our countries are to bear fruit, all of the partners, national and foreign alike, will have to support Africa's development efforts in an effective way. If they are to be mutually beneficial, the proceeds of all public and private assistance will simply have to take account of everyone's respective requirements for well-being.

Within the framework of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Guinea welcomes the Marrakesh Agreements that gave rise to the World Trade Organization. Those Agreements will be viable, however, only if they take genuine account of the need to promote the integration of the African economy into the world economy by developing its capacities and making it more dynamic. In this connection we strongly support the idea of setting up a commodities diversification fund.

My delegation greatly appreciates the special attention given to Africa at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva, which considered the conditions for implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Bilateral initiatives must be supported in order to strengthen South-South cooperation on the one hand and to continue the North-South dialogue on the other hand.

Moreover the Agenda for Development must focus primarily on Africa, where much of the population lives in poverty. Implementation of that Agenda, complementing the Agenda for Peace, will make it possible once again to measure the new political will that has emerged at recent international conferences on social development, population and development, and women.

The Secretary-General's Agenda for Development offers an appropriate framework for North-South dialogue and it must also enable the United Nations to provide better coordination for, and to make more operational, the policies and programmes implemented by its specialized agencies and institutions, which have had a very limited positive impact on the economies of developing countries so far.

In this connection my Government notes with real interest and much hope that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will be organizing a world summit on food security in November 1996. That world-wide meeting will make it possible we believe to formulate specific and appropriate solutions to the serious economic problems facing developing countries.

Of course, all these hopes will be in vain if the States of the world are unable to crush drug-trafficking and abuse.

While reconfirming our support for Agenda 21 and all the agreements on sustainable development, we believe that it is only greater political will that will make it possible to translate into action the decisions that emerge from these various meetings.

At the Halifax Summit, held from 15 to 17 June last, the Group of Seven quite rightly recognized that sustainable development was one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century. At that meeting it was also said that better quality of life for all was the objective of sustainable development, the foundations of which are democracy, human rights, transparent and responsible management of public affairs, investment in the human individual and protection of the environment. Guinea

welcomes the commitments entered into by the Group of Seven to support national efforts in this area.

Protecting fundamental human rights, meeting human needs, achieving social justice and human development are still the focus of concern of the Government of Guinea in its ambitious economic and social reform programme, which has been under way since 1984. Guinea is party to several international conventions relating to human rights because it is firmly committed to promoting and protecting these fundamental rights and freedoms.

Today I am happy to be able to tell the international community that my country completed instituting its democratic republican institutions in June this year when we organized our multiparty legislative and municipal elections.

The successful completion of this process of democratization, the establishment of a State of law, and the liberalization of the economy in the Republic of Guinea all benefited from the support and understanding of the international community as a whole and I should like to thank you all for this.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies, as the paramount instrument for cooperation and multilateral agreement, see their responsibilities increased today more than ever before. Today this universal Organization has certainly acquired a certain prestige. Its help is requested in every area.

To strengthen its effectiveness on this fiftieth anniversary of its founding, the United Nations must restructure and revitalize its principal organs in the light of the changes that have taken place in the international arena and taking account of the challenges facing mankind in the forthcoming millennium.

The reforms must be based on the principle of equality among Member States at the level of decision-making bodies and also within the various organs.

It is only in this way that our common heritage, this irreplaceable tool, this United Nations, will be able successfully to discharge its mission of preserving international peace and security and promoting a fairer world, more equitable and more prosperous world.

The success of this institution does depend of course on an improvement in its financial situation at a time when its responsibilities are constantly increasing in this ever-changing international situation.

The United Nations has existed for half a century now. The solemn celebration of its first 50 years coincides with the twilight of the twentieth century and it offers its 185 Members an opportunity to try to revitalize its activities and to agree on equitable representation within its principal organs. In Guinea commemoration of this historic event is taking place with the full support of our Government.

May the decades to come bring greater understanding among people and among nations so as to ensure the greater happiness of mankind.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, and former President of the General Assembly, His Excellency, the Honourable Professor Guido de Marco.

Mr. de Marco (Malta): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. You bring to the Assembly the wealth of your personal, political and academic experience and the positive contribution which Portugal has given to the work of the Organization throughout its 40 years of membership. At the dawn of democracy in your country, yours was a determining contribution towards freedom based on fundamental human rights and a State built on the rule of law. Your commitment to these principles required no mean measure of moral and physical courage.

May I join other speakers in saluting the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Amara Essy, who skilfully led the forty-ninth session and continued to promote the revitalization of the General Assembly within a broader framework of strengthening the United Nations system.

It is with great pleasure that we are convinced that, under your able leadership, Mr. President, Member States will continue to strive to ensure that this Assembly reflects with immediacy and with clarity that which the world community desires of the United Nations.

The maintenance of international peace through the advancement of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom for all was 50 years ago, and remains today, the onerous but vital mission entrusted to

this Organization by the peoples of the United Nations. In looking back at the past 50 years, we must exercise realistic restraint. It would be a mistake to recall only those instances when our efforts were crowned with success. It would be equally erroneous if we were to judge the efficacy of the United Nations by highlighting only those complex instances when results failed to do justice to our collective will and endeavour.

The determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war was what inspired nations and brought them together to form this Organization towards the end of the Second World War. We have managed to avoid a global conflict. This is in itself a great achievement, one that inspires hope and confidence. Yet realistic restraint is particularly called for at this moment. Grief still echoes over the explosions of cannon fire aimed at villages and cities under siege.

During its first 45 years the United Nations was held hostage to the prevailing cold war logic. Yet even during those years, when world peace was strapped to the terrifying balance of nuclear destructive potential, there were moments of great significance.

The process of decolonization, even if there was suffering at times, remains a peak achievement in humankind's history during the twentieth century. It reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. That process paved the way for the achievement of independence by peoples spread around the globe, who today are represented in this Hall as sovereign nations.

The five years since the end of the cold war have witnessed a world community subjected to the most intense periods of instability. High expectations violently oscillated with the doldrums of despair; the exuberant relief of peoples ridding themselves of totalitarian rule alternated with the miserable anguish of occupation and "ethnic cleansing"; rays of hope were paralleled by violent explosions of civil strife; nuclear non-proliferation was countered by a devastating spread in the traffic in conventional weaponry; peace for some was matched by wanton slaughter for others. Never have mankind's aspirations been so great, yet never have they been so formidably challenged.

Such events cannot but impact on our concept of security. The primary mandate of the United Nations is

> "To maintain international peace ..., and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

How can we ensure and implement this commission?

Five years ago, in the General Assembly, I had the honour of calling on the United Nations to implement the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter with regard to regional arrangements. Later, at the Helsinki follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Malta proposed that the CSCE declare itself a regional arrangement, in terms of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter — which it did.

It is still too early to assess the impact and full potential of that development, particularly in view of the complex situations that already existed and continued to develop in the CSCE region. However, we are convinced that the future ability and effectiveness of the United Nations in containing, addressing and resolving situations of conflict is dependent on the creation and consolidation of such regional arrangements.

The world has witnessed communities rediscover the oldest recipes for the generation of human misery. Most of us believed that tolerance was universally embraced, that it was strong enough to have imbued the manner in which we view elements that give nations and ethnic and religious groups their rightful identity. The abuse of these elements as a platform and weapon of war cannot but instil in us determination to consolidate structures that promote a permanent confidence-building dialogue.

During the darkest hours of the cold war the CSCE learnt that confidence-building was the most effective guarantee in the promotion of a wider concept of security. That conviction remains as we seek to identify the supporting structures for a European security architecture. The broad elements of the emerging European security architecture are already in place.

On one hand, the CSCE, now changed into the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), is transmuting the notion of confidence- and security-building from a remedial measure of the age of antagonism to a tool of partnership in the new international environment.

On the other hand, the enlarging European Union, of which Malta expects to become full member in the near future, provides a unique and ever-deepening

dimension of the process of regional cooperation. Malta has always seen membership of the European Union in terms that encompass not only economic but also much broader political dimensions. In this spirit, membership of the Union constitutes for us both the natural culmination of our significant economic and social development of recent years and — more important — the opportunity to participate in a collective endeavour that consolidates union within Europe and stability within the region, thereby providing a solid anchorage for those fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law and the observance of human rights to which we are deeply attached.

Comprehensive security is distinct from notions of defence. It is much wider in scope. It is more appropriate for treating issues not necessarily or immediately linked with a military threat or outbreak of conflict. Comprehensive regional security structures could be the most effective instruments for identifying, analysing and containing the original root causes of potential conflict.

Such regional arrangements cannot operate in isolation. They must take into account the work of other international mechanisms that help signal developments which, in the short or long term, could destabilize regional or international security. Early-warning systems are an essential ingredient for success.

To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war we must cultivate and nurture stability. Equilibrium in the socio-political environment cannot be ensured through suppression or imposition. It requires the development of effective rapid-response mechanisms to tackle problem areas that generate instability. A multifaceted approach demonstrates an awareness of the manner in which different issues, if left unattended or unresolved, fester and spread to threaten society.

Weaving such vital areas as human rights, fundamental freedoms and social justice into the broader network of comprehensive security is the foundation for the launching of stability pacts which give peoples and nations the reassurance of peace, dignity and freedom.

In this respect Malta has been active in promoting security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. The obstacles are enormous, but the perils that threaten to transform this historic middle-sea into a permanent lake of instability are even greater.

Though aware of the difficulties in the way of its final implementation, we have supported the idea of a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean, and within this concept of stability in the Mediterranean we have ourselves proposed two distinct but correlated ideas, namely, that of a council of the Mediterranean and a stability pact for the Mediterranean. Both are based on the notion of dialogue in that region of turbulence.

The setting up of a council of the Mediterranean through an association of Mediterranean States at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs would facilitate cooperation at the highest political level. A parliamentary dimension to that association further enhances this joint action and ensures a wider spectrum of participation by the elected representatives in the identification and solution of problem areas of common concern.

The measured success of the Stability Pact for Europe, first launched by France, has underlined the need for applying this notion to the Mediterranean region itself. With this in mind, at the concluding conference on the Stability Pact for Europe, Malta launched the concept of a stability pact for the Mediterranean based on the round-table system and not only bringing together parties to disputes but also making possible the discussion of issues which can serve to pre-empt the development of new threats to the security of peoples and States in the region. The generally positive reception which this notion has encountered encourages us to pursue its development further.

Malta welcomes the holding of a Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference at Barcelona in November to consider future economic and political relations as a milestone in the consolidation of regional cooperation. The Mediterranean's wealth lies in its heritage of cultural, religious and social diversity. A forced mutation of this rich mosaic into uniformity would be destabilizing. Confidence-building and mutual understanding create the route that leads to security and cooperation. We must walk that arduous path. Within multicultural diversity we must discover the common values that help foster dialogue. This requires shedding preconceived notions. It requires strong political will. It requires that we supplant instinctive mistrust with a spirit of mutual respect.

The key protagonists in the Middle East crisis have demonstrated how political will and dialogue can overcome obstacles that for decades appeared insurmountable. We have supported the peace process and will continue to support it, and we welcome the

official signing in Washington today of the agreements reached last Sunday in Taba, Egypt, by Chairman Arafat and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, respectively. A just and long-lasting peace in the Middle East requires a solution that takes into account both the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of States to secure boundaries. May this process of dialogue inspire others who still resist this unique human tool of conflict resolution.

In particular, we are deeply concerned that the division of Cyprus has so far remained impervious to the efforts of the international community, especially those of the Secretary-General, to find a just and lasting peaceful solution. We predict that persistent efforts in this regard will eventually prevail.

The Mediterranean process is of great significance to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The time that the United Nations has dedicated over the years to defusing and resolving issues which threaten peace in the region illustrates the weight which we attach to the spill-over potential of current crises. More important, however, is the fact that a successful Mediterranean process could inspire patterns of cooperation in other areas characterized by multicultural diversity.

Important as it is to create forums that make it easier for political leaders to enter into dialogue on and identify common strategies, the essential ingredient for long-term stability, is the building of peace in the minds of all women and men. The United Nations and its agencies have had a major role in the effort to identify common strategies for future achievements built on knowledge of and respect for the multicultural diversity of the world community.

During the past 12 months three world conferences have touched on the most crucial aspects of human rights and freedoms, the dignity of the human person and the right of all peoples to development. At Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing we worked together, conscious of our cultural differences, yet aware that diversity need not and must not impede our common endeavours if we are mindful of our common heritage, our common concern and our common interest.

This respect for multicultural identities has been evident in the commitments undertaken by States and in the principles which inspire the platforms of action. It must remain ever-present in the mind of all United Nations officials entrusted with its implementation.

One other area in which the United Nations has traditionally been very active is that of arms control and disarmament. Over the past 12 months the international community has had the satisfaction of seeing a successful conclusion to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference, with the agreement on the indefinite extension of the non-proliferation regime. Malta is proud to have taken an active role in helping to bring about this agreement.

We now look forward to an early agreement on the comprehensive ban on the testing of all nuclear weapons. We urge all countries, in particular the nuclear States, to take all possible measures to ensure a successful conclusion, during the coming 12 months, of the negotiations which have been taking place within the Conference on Disarmament since 1994.

Anniversaries encourage us to drink from the original source for inspiration. The United Nations Charter was forged at a time when the struggle against a totalitarian world vision was nearly complete. The horrors of war were still tangible, but so also was the fear of what could have been the fate of humankind had a totalitarian vision prevailed.

The Charter established within its principal organs a delicate balance based on the equal rights of nations, large and small, and a pragmatic awareness of the particular role which certain States had in ensuring international peace and security.

During the past five years we have assisted in an intense discussion among Member States on whether or not there exists the need to evolve, reform or restructure the principal organs of the Charter. I am personally honoured to have been the first President of the General Assembly to chair such a discussion within the Organization and to make a presidential motion on this matter approved by the Assembly which ensured continuity. This process was later to give fruit in the formation of the Working Groups which examined the revitalization of the General Assembly and are still studying the different options relative to the restructuring of the Security Council.

In this ongoing process of review and evaluation, we have failed to take into account the future of the Trusteeship Council. Aware that the Trusteeship Council had nearly completed its responsibilities for the Trust Territories for which it was responsible, five years ago I proposed to the General Assembly a new, additional

role — that of trustee of the different areas of common heritage. It is because of the uncertainty as to the future of the Council and the diverse opinions on this matter that we have requested the inclusion of an item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session entitled "Review of the role of the Trusteeship Council".

We are confident that when the item is discussed by the Assembly — first in plenary and later within the Sixth Committee — Member States will bring and share their views with that same openness and frankness that have characterized the discussion of the other two principal organs. Naturally we shall, on that occasion, expound further our ideas on how the Trusteeship Council could evolve.

There is one aspect which I consider it opportune to underline at this stage: the notion of the United Nations as a trustee. The notion that the Charter envisages is unique to the Trusteeship Council. It is a notion which, at the time, was immediately explicable and applicable to the Territories placed under its care. Today, in a world that has become a global community, we are aware that the different areas of common heritage protected by convention require coordination by a trustee.

To avoid fragmentation, dispersal or duplication of effort in areas which are our common heritage, our common concern and our common interest, we should explore the manner in which this principal organ of the United Nations can evolve that notion of trust, which was its major premise, to meet our present-day needs, an evolution that ensures that the Trusteeship Council holds in sacred trust the common heritage of humankind and acts as a guardian of the interests of future generations.

During the past months we have all invested much time and energy in generating public awareness on the importance of the fiftieth anniversary. The peoples of the United Nations are sensitive to what we do and decide in this forum, not out of mere curiosity or an interest in international affairs, but because the decisions we take have a direct bearing on their personal lives. They did so in the past, when decolonization brought sovereignty to States and freedom to many millions. They do so at present, when the United Nations and its blue insignia represent the last beacon of hope for those terrorized by the brutality of war, famine or disease. Likewise, our decisions have a bearing on the lives of those who serve the Organization in the field, on the fate of the families of peace-keepers killed in United Nations operations and all those of whom we expect sacrifice to ensure the success of sanctions.

We pay a special tribute to all United Nations peace-keepers, and in particular those killed while on mission. Their dedication to duty, humanitarian concern and peace is honoured by the whole international community.

Our deliberations this year have a particular significance. On them hinge the hopes of millions. As we take decisions, may we continue to be inspired by that commitment to the maintenance of international peace, the advancement of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom for all peoples, which is the platform of action set forth in the Charter. Only then will we rightfully deserve to be regarded as trustees of the common concerns, common interests and common heritage which the peoples of the United Nations have charged to our care.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakstan, His Excellency Mr. Kassymjomart Tokaev.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakstan): Please accept my congratulations, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. This attests to your excellent qualities, which will undoubtedly contribute to the successful discussion of all the items on the agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to express special appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his great contribution to the solution of international problems of the world community and his efficient management aimed at the establishment of new relations between nations in the twenty-first century.

We have to note that this anniversary session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time of increased tension and continued armed conflicts in different parts of the globe. One of the most dangerous and complicated is the Bosnian conflict. Events in Bosnia defy straightforward interpretation. At the same time, the readiness recently displayed by the parties in conflict to settle existing problems on the basis of adherence to the principles of State sovereignty inspires optimism and hope that long-awaited peace will be established in the Balkans. In Kazakstan's opinion one of the most important conditions for achieving peace is that respective countries in the territory of the former Yugoslavia continue to exist as sovereign States within the borders recognized by the world community.

We highly appreciate the role of the United Nations peace-keeping forces, which in differing situations have done their best to contain conflicts and alleviate the consequences of hostilities for the civilian population. We have no doubt that the Organization has to exercise all its authority in such situations. The world community should provide more effective assistance to the United Nations so that it can use its peace-keeping forces in areas of conflict in a more efficient and timely manner.

Creation of regional and global structures designed to promote long-lasting peace is an important aspect of international security. The balance of forces, upset after the end of the cold war, should be restored not through the establishment of new military and political alliances but through international treaties and agreements promoting security and stability and through the establishment and use of effective mechanisms of preventive diplomacy.

We view as quite successful the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), whose sphere of responsibility includes not only Europe but Central Asia as well. A high degree of efficiency in security matters concerning the Asian and Pacific region is being displayed by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) forum.

Kazakstan, for its part, continues its work towards the convening of a conference on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia. The forum's mandate is being drawn up by the Special Working Group. We believe that all the countries of the Asian continent, despite their heterogeneity, have an equal interest in durable peace and stability, which is an important guarantee for their progressive movement towards economic prosperity and internal stability. Taking this opportunity, I urge all Asian countries to contribute to the realization of this idea, expressed by President Nazarbayev from the rostrum of this lofty Organization at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

We firmly believe that no matter how strong and effective the United Nations may be, no matter how comprehensive its activities are, security and peace should be the backbone of the policy of all countries, irrespective of their capabilities and regional affiliation. We see that in the new geopolitical reality more emphasis is being placed on meeting the various needs of the individual. There is a general understanding that quick solutions of security and stability issues cannot and should not take the place of a long-term strategy of sustainable development. In other words, in today's world there is an emerging tendency towards a gradual transition from national security to human security.

The Republic of Kazakstan, which used to be a de facto nuclear-weapon State and now is a nuclear-free State, is making its contribution to these global transformations. The elimination of all existing nuclear warheads in Kazakstan's territory and of the last nuclear charge at the already-closed Semipalatinsk nuclear-test site has been a highly important step in the fulfilment of Kazakstan's international obligations.

Kazakstan is a consistent advocate of a moratorium on nuclear tests and of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which should be concluded as soon as possible but not later than next year.

Addressing the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in June 1995 in Geneva, Kazakstan's President reaffirmed its commitment to the consistent policy of the strengthening of international security in its new interpretation. The President of Kazakstan stressed that various needs of the individual must be met. Indeed, the success of the disarmament process is measured today not only by the percentage of warheads and delivery systems cut but also by the increase in the production of goods for the people.

In the light of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit, emerging models of human development should include new concepts for solving educational, employment, environmental and health-care problems. Urgent and effective measures are needed to address a dangerous growth in unemployment — an especially pressing problem for the economies in transition. We believe that these countries can legitimately expect from the United Nations the adoption of special measures promoting their sustainable development. The priority that this matter should be given by the United Nations can be explained by a number of factors.

Indeed, modern geo-economic trends reflect the fact that in the near future world economic centres in North America, South-East Asia and Europe will emerge or be strengthened. The stability and effectiveness of these centres cannot be imagined without their involvement in trade and economic relations with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which, even taken separately, represent significant economic and political entities capable of filling existing gaps in relations between Europe and Asia, North and South. It is

relevant, first of all, in the case of Kazakstan — a major Central Asian State.

Speaking of the need to adapt the United Nations system to the new geo-political realities, we think that the potential of the countries of Central Asia should be taken into account. Their capabilities in the formulation of the strategies of sustainable development and peace-making are becoming stronger. Close attention should be paid to the impetus for cooperation with the United Nations, in the interest of a secure world, that is being served by these countries.

In this context, I would like to draw attention to President Nazarbayev's initiative regarding the establishment, under the auspices of the United Nations, of a unit of the armed forces of three Central Asian republics — Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In our opinion, this would contribute to the strengthening of security and peace in Central Asia — a region which also has its areas of conflict.

In the opinion of Kazakstan, priority attention in cooperation between the United Nations and the economies in transition should be paid to the protection of the environment, which is one of the five main dimensions of development. In the Central Asian region, the ecological threat is one of the most dangerous threats to human security.

We think that the world community should pay special attention to the tragedy of the Aral Sea region. According to the World Bank, in the next 25 years, the efforts to restore an ecological balance in the region will require $50 billion. Such a project is not feasible without financial assistance from international organizations. Thus, we are interested in the search for new international sources of financing, and support the idea of devising a system of international taxes on arms transfers and transactions, involving currency flows, to achieve global human, including ecological, security.

I would like to say a few words about United Nations reforms. The position of Kazakstan on this issue is as follows. Reforms are necessary, but they should be carried out with the utmost care, in order to avoid upsetting the balance of the whole system of international relations. The Charter of the United Nations should largely remain as the basis and the reference point for the work of the Organization, to which there is no alternative in the modern world.

Major changes that have taken place in the world since the creation of the United Nations should be reflected in the composition of the Security Council. Kazakstan believes that the number of Council members, including the number of permanent members, could, in principle, be increased.

We welcome measures taken by the Secretary-General to reduce expenses related to the activities of the Secretariat. It is important, in our opinion, that such an essential body as the International Court of Justice should also be adapted to present-day requirements. The idea of having important decisions adopted in an economic security council appears to be worthy of attention, considering the need, in the view of many countries, to reorganize and revitalize the Economic and Social Council.

Debates on fundamental United Nations documents — the reports by the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" — reveal the need for a more detailed analysis of ways to develop society by meeting the social, economic, political and cultural needs of the individual. We are especially aware of this now as we celebrate, under the auspices of UNESCO, the 150th anniversary of Abai, a great Kazak poet, educator and philosopher, who devoted his life to the mutual spiritual and cultural enrichment of nations.

The desire to jointly solve the issues of "peace and development" also lies at the heart of our proposal to set up a United Nations commission for central Asia — a joint body of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). This idea was initially proposed by the President of the Republic of Kazakstan, Mr. N. Nazarbaev, at the Summit of the member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization in 1993 in Istanbul. The common nature of the social, economic and political objectives of the countries in the region, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, determines the need to establish regional mechanisms for their attainment and to create appropriate structures. The progress achieved by the countries of Central Asia in this regard is reflected by the rather effective activities of the OECD, as well as those of the economic union between Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Speaking about the importance of this problem for the Central Asian States, I would like to note that, judging by past experience, the efforts of two important

regional Commissions — ESCAP and ECE — are not adequately coordinated with regard to this group of countries. As a result, the republics of Central Asia are not sufficiently involved in their programmes.

As the United Nations Organization approaches its fiftieth anniversary, it has great accomplishments to its credit in peacemaking and in the strengthening of international security. As a well-known Japanese writer once said: only life filled with a workaday routine might be worse and more dreadful than a war. Least of all would we like to see the United Nations as a structure which mechanically services the demands of mankind on a day-by-day basis. In other words, we do not want to see the United Nations as a rigid structure, insensitive to the profound changes of our rapidly changing times. The world continues to pin its hopes on the United Nations as a concentrated source of wisdom, justice and responsiveness to the sufferings of mankind. The world appeals to the United Nations to rise above immediate plans and programmes in order to appreciate fully the mosaic of modern international relations in all their variety and diversity. And we firmly believe that the United Nations should adequately respond to the aspirations of all peoples yearning for peace and tranquillity, aspirations born out of their very existence.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.11

General Assembly

Official Records

Fiftieth Session

11th plenary meeting
Thursday, 28 September 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: The first speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, His Excellency Mr. Juraj Schenk, on whom I now call.

Mr. Schenk (Slovakia): Mr. President, it is undoubtedly a great honour to be the President of the United Nations General Assembly session in this very important year. Please accept my sincere congratulations on your election and my very best wishes for a successful course of its fiftieth session.

I should also like to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, for his significant contribution to the positive results achieved at last year's session.

By the end of 1995, the Slovak Republic will have concluded the third year of its sovereign existence. Although my country is relatively new in the international community, it has during the past three years confirmed that its activities in the international scene are based on respect for international law and for the principles of democratic coexistence between nations.

The basic coordinate of Slovakia's foreign policy is its integration into the geopolitical and economic sphere with which we not only have numerous historical ties, but also — and, I think, more importantly — with which we share the same hierarchy of modern civilized values.

Along with other Central European countries, Slovakia has made significant progress in the transformation of its political and economic system, as well as in the process of democratization. We feel political and economical closeness to the West, and we are aware of the unique historical opportunity to join the prosperous union of democratic European countries.

Slovakia as a standard democratic State is an integral part of the Central European space, which is undoubtedly important for political and military stability in Europe. We want to contribute to building that stability by maintaining good-neighbourly relations backed by a set of legally sound treaties, as well as by mutually beneficial cooperation. We proceed from the fact that such cooperation is a basic precondition for the stability and prosperity of all the countries in our region.

Good relations with the States of the G-7, of the Commonwealth of Independent States and all democratic countries, are also of great importance to us. We wish to make full use of the opportunity for cooperation with the dynamically developing Asia-Pacific region, with the Latin American countries, and with Near and Middle East countries as well.

The Slovak Republic participates in maintaining international peace and security within the framework of

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United Nations activities. Our priority at this stage is full membership in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). In this respect I cannot omit to note that our membership in the Conference on Disarmament following that of the former Czecho-Slovak federation, which had been working in that organ since the very beginning, remains the only unresolved issue. In all other organs, the seat occupied by the former Czecho-Slovakia was assigned to either the Czech Republic or to Slovakia by elections or by appointments based on the respective rules, with both successor States having agreed not to compete with each other in order to obtain seats in organs of the United Nations system which had been vacated by the dissolution of the federation. In accordance with this agreement and with the support of the Eastern European regional group, Slovakia submitted its candidature for the seat vacated by the former Czecho-Slovak federation, to which Slovakia is one of the successor States, in the Conference on Disarmament. In other words, we have had and we still have a serious interest in filling the gap which has arisen in the membership of that Conference. We consider it unjustifiable to link the issue of filling the vacancy in the membership of the Conference with the broader issue of the expansion of its membership, which has been under discussion for many years. We expect that States members of the Conference will understand this situation and will support Slovakia and its legitimate effort to pursue the previous activities of Czecho-Slovak diplomacy in the Conference on Disarmament.

The results of the Fifth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) represent an important impulse for the further activities of the Conference on Disarmament. The extension of the Treaty for an indefinite period is the most important result of the Review Conference. We consider it a precondition for the further development of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Non-Proliferation Treaty has played a positive role in the modern history of mankind. Being the only Treaty with a global character, it has managed to reduce the risk of further expansion of the group of nuclear-weapon States.

Slovakia places special emphasis on the preparation of the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) in 1996, and supports the immediate commencement of negotiations aimed at elaborating the text of the fissile materials cut-off treaty. This would lead to further progress in building up a new security architecture, and it would become an important milestone on the road to an era when nuclear weapons will be considered unnecessary.

Slovakia, as one of the signatory States, attaches great importance to the chemical weapons Convention (CWC), which has outlawed a whole category of weapons of mass destruction. It is my pleasure to inform the Assembly that the Slovak Parliament approved this Convention three weeks ago, and we will soon submit the ratification instruments to the Secretary-General.

In connection with the forthcoming Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), my country is ready to support the successful course of work and the adoption of the text of Protocol IV, which would enable the effective implementation of the Convention. Slovakia was among the very first countries to place an embargo on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. We also highly appreciate the results of the International Meeting on United Nations Mine Clearance Programmes held under the auspices of the Secretary-General. This forum stressed the need for a more active approach to the reduction of negative impacts caused by the use of these inhumane weapons, which especially afflict the civil population, including innocent children.

The conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia has thoroughly tested the entire international community, but especially the United Nations Organization itself. The level at which we pass this test will affect relations in the international political scene for the next few decades. Slovakia considers peace talks to be the only way leading to a stable and just solution. Military actions have turned out to be counter-productive and to have only a temporary character. They cannot overcome the animosity between the warring sides. Our effort is aimed at finding generally acceptable solutions agreed upon by all parties at the negotiating table. Their equal status can be considered to be one of the crucial prerequisites in approaching this crisis. Therefore, we support the plan of the Contact Group and see it as a sound starting-point for direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict.

In order to achieve stability in the Mediterranean region, a just and lasting solution of the problem of Cyprus should be found. In this context, my country supports the efforts of the international community and highly esteems in particular the contribution which the Secretary-General made in stressing the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Cyprus. We think it is

necessary that negotiations continue between the two communities in order to reunite the island. This process, if it is to be concluded successfully, has to take into consideration the individual and specific differences existing within the population. Slovakia is ready to continue providing its good services aimed at facilitating meetings between political representatives of the two communities.

Since there are so many conflicts in all parts of the world, my country welcomes any progress that would strengthen international security and peace. Just to mention a few examples, visible progress has been made in the Middle East peace process focused on the final settlement of the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict. The agreements signed between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have proved the correct and appropriate nature of the peace talks and of the efforts of the two parties and of the international community. These efforts are based on the conviction that the two parties can coexist peacefully.

United Nations peace-keeping operations have become one of the most discussed issues. Slovakia considers peace-keeping operations to be an important instrument with which the international community can maintain peace and security in the world. On the other hand, we realize that the current situation is not ideal. Therefore, we support the process of restructuring peace-keeping operations, which would increase their effectiveness and allow them to react quickly. This would require the mandate of peace-keeping missions to be clear, unambiguous and realistic — that is, implementable. In this context, we welcome the Supplement to the Agenda for Peace as an effort to strengthen the element of conflict prevention. We have been following the discussions on these issues with great attention and we share the view that, at this stage, peace-keeping, rather than peace-enforcement, is the realistic solution reflecting both the complexity of most conflicts and what the international community can sustain.

Slovakia's position has been reflected in the types of units and services provided for peace-keeping operations. At the current time we have 600 engineers in the former Yugoslavia and five military observers in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission. The Slovak Engineer Battalion was awarded an honorary diploma by the Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force in November 1994 in recognition of its professional skills and the quality of the work done.

In order to achieve the goals set forth by the United Nations, it is necessary that they be realized in a democratic environment, especially with regard to the protection of human rights. The Slovak Republic has succeeded to all the relevant international obligations of the former Czecho-Slovak federation. In the field of human rights, this means that Slovakia is a party to all of the international human rights conventions. This active approach has also resulted in a variety of documents approved in domestic legislation and in foreign policy.

I should like to mention just a few examples, especially the incorporation of international human rights protection standards into the Constitution of the Slovak Republic; the further harmonization of other legal norms to those standards; the establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, and the Governmental Committee for the implementation of the Action Programme against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance; active participation in the preparation of international documents concerning the protection of persons belonging to ethnic minorities; the ratification of the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on the Protection of Minorities; and, last but not least, the reflection of this document, together with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities in the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations and Friendly Cooperation signed this year with Hungary.

Slovakia is very sensitive to all kinds of disrespect for and gross violation of values which are the keystone of human dignity, and my country therefore highly appreciates United Nations activities in regard to the protection of human rights. We are prepared to contribute to the strengthening of international cooperation in order to achieve higher respect for human rights and basic freedoms for all, regardless of their race, gender, language or religion.

Speaking of human rights, we cannot overlook the rights of women. The Fourth World Conference on Women, which has just concluded, has raised a number of questions which will have to be resolved by our joint efforts. We welcome the successful outcome of this event and we were honoured, as a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, to take active part in the preparation of its final document, the Platform for Action.

There are a number of social issues related to the status of women. One of them is the role of the family in society. The International Centre for Family Studies has been active in Slovakia since the end of 1993 and it has

repeatedly proved its viability by actively participating at various international events. This Centre was the co-organizer of the United Nations Interregional Meeting of National Coordinators — Focal Point for the Year of the Family, held in Bratislava from 4 to 7 February 1995. These facts have led our Government to seek opportunities for closer cooperation between the Centre and the United Nations. Slovakia has therefore submitted a proposal for affiliating the Centre with the United Nations. We would highly appreciate our proposal being given positive consideration.

Slovakia appreciates the efforts of the United Nations with a view to the restructuring and revitalization of its activities in the economic, social and other related fields, as well as all reforms connected with them. We consider these efforts to be a contribution to improving the efficiency of the work of the United Nations and a positive reaction to all major changes taking place all over the world.

We fully support the basic approach and goals of the two fundamental documents approved by the United Nations in the area of international economic cooperation in the 1990s: the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

One of the main priorities anchored in these documents is the development of human resources within the overall development framework. These documents are based on global consensus. Their aim is to improve the social and economic situation of the poor and least developed parts of our planet and thus to eliminate one of the main sources of conflicts — the huge differences between the wealthy and poor countries. All these goals are in the best interest of the Slovak Republic, too.

During the last decade, the number of countries meeting the criteria for being "least developed" has significantly increased. Together with other global problems such as environmental protection and sustainable development, which cannot be resolved by a single country or several countries, this is a challenge for all mankind, and for the most developed countries in particular. However, we must stress also the primary responsibility of the countries concerned for their further development.

Nowadays, Slovakia itself, as well as other Central and East European countries, must face a variety of complicated economic problems related to the process of transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. This process has never before been carried out to such an extent. We are deeply interested in continued access to valuable information within United Nations projects related to know-how, human resources development and management training. This would certainly help us in carrying out our economic reform.

Despite the complicated economic situation, my country has a strong will to participate actively in United Nations programmes in areas in which we could be of assistance, namely in areas concerning human resources in developing countries. For example, we see opportunities for broader participation by Slovak experts in development programmes.

Slovakia supports all activities of the United Nations in the field of assistance to developing countries. We welcome the increasing efforts of these countries not to be in the position of passive recipients only, and we value their endeavour to take over the management of their economic and technical development. At the same time, we highly appreciate the United Nations role in implementing its projects, to reflect the needs of the receiving countries fully, while respecting specific features of their economies and their priorities and making use of the domestic human, technical and technological potential.

Nowadays, when the United Nations is going through a complicated period of its existence, it is particularly important to determine the direction of its activities, with, as a starting-point, the processes going on in international relations. Interconnection between global and national interests is the defining factor in coping with the problems which all mankind is facing at the moment.

If the United Nations is really to understand the very nature of these processes, it will be necessary to start its own reform. We support such reform and therefore support all steps that would strengthen the United Nations system and thereby enable it to perform its tasks more effectively. This reform will require, *inter alia*, the restructuring of most of the Organization's main bodies. As for Security Council reform, we support expanding the Council by the addition of new members that are able to assume global responsibilities and have sufficient potential to support United Nations activities financially. The credibility and efficiency of the Security Council have to be stressed as the main priorities.

We are fully aware of the difficult financial situation, which is a result of unpaid arrears by Member States. Member States are very often unable to pay their assessed contributions. Therefore, we support the reform of the scale of assessment based on the principle of the capacity to pay, and we also expect the reform to increase effectiveness and transparency of spending.

In connection with the United Nations budget, I wish to mention that Slovakia, in spite of the fact that it is undergoing a transformation of its economy and has to cope with various pressures on State finances, has always fulfilled its obligation to pay its assessed contribution to the regular budget in full. As concerns its contribution to the budget for peace-keeping operations, Slovakia is in the same position as the Czech Republic. These two countries have not been classified into any of the groups for the apportionment of peace-keeping expenses even though they have been Members of the United Nations for more than two and a half years. We believe that this issue will be resolved at this year's session of the General Assembly, and that in so doing we shall take realistically into account the respective economic data. Having analysed the data and having compared it with data from other countries, we have reached the firm conviction that Slovakia should be placed among the Member States of Group "C" for the apportionment of peace-keeping expenses. From this rostrum I want to confirm that Slovakia is ready to shoulder its fair share of responsibility for this important activity of the United Nations.

This year we commemorate five decades since the end of the horrors of the Second World War, since that moment when all nations put aside weapons with the intention of living in peace, and, for this reason, decided to establish an organization which would serve as a platform for international cooperation. Looking back at those decades we must logically come to the conclusion that the United Nations has played a crucial role in our history and that its existence is still justified.

Although the ceremonies will culminate in meetings next month, we can already say that we did our best to ensure the commemoration of this anniversary with honour. For the celebration of this anniversary, a special committee established in Slovakia organized many education-oriented events, a number of which are still taking place. The main goal of all seminars, meetings, and television and radio broadcasts has been to focus more attention on the activities of this undoubtedly most important international organization, not only in the field of maintaining international peace and security but also, and especially, in the field of the development of international cooperation in all areas of human activity.

I wish the best for this session of the General Assembly, and I wish it much spiritual strength in resolving the important issues which the United Nations is facing now.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, His Excellency Mr. Galo Leoro Franco.

Mr. Leoro Franco (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, a renowned and distinguished academician and internationalist, on your well-deserved election as President of this historic session of the General Assembly marked by the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I should also like to pay a tribute to Mr. Amara Essy in recognition of the admirable work he performed as President of the forty-ninth session of the Assembly.

At the end of the twentieth century and the dawn of a new millennium, in a world characterized by a globalization of the economy and the dynamics of international relations, our reality is conditioned by factors such as the substantial progress of science, the transcendence of the technological revolution, the decisive influence of communications and information, the expansion of trade and the consequences of cultural and religious interaction. However, an acute imbalance of social and economic aspects coexists with these factors, mainly in the developing world, whose inhabitants account for three quarters of mankind.

We are faced with problems that were not foreseen at the beginning of this century, including the internationalization of environmental problems, fragmentation and the revival of violent nationalisms, political and social instability, and the decrease in the transfer of international resources for development.

In many third world countries social problems are increasingly becoming more acute. Extreme poverty, accompanied by hunger, malnutrition, abandonment, unemployment, disease and ignorance, has been combined in many regions with guerrilla movements and armed insurrection. Several countries face the consequences of the foreign debt crisis, associated with the lack of international political solidarity to relieve it.

In many regions corruption has become an endemic disease. The production, consumption of and trafficking in narcotic drugs devastate our traditional social structures. Violence, rural and urban, is on the increase, and the brutal means frequently used to suppress it actually promote its growth. Thus, in my capacity as Secretary *pro tempore* of the Rio Group, and as Ecuador's representative in the Group, I should like, on its behalf, to call for the convening of a second international conference on narcotic drugs to examine appropriate mechanisms to foster the world fight against drug trafficking and its dire consequences.

Keeping this perspective in mind, Ecuador will continue to favour the adoption of urgent measures within the international community to fight vigorously against all these social problems, which affect so many countries. The General Assembly proclaimed 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. My country hopes that, with this proclamation, international public opinion will become more conscious of the complexity of this grave problem and will try to find measures for its solution.

Since the end of the cold war, international tensions have eased, and the intensification of trust between States has fostered the adoption of measures concerning nuclear disarmament. However, the danger implied by the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons prevails. For this reason, Ecuador strongly condemned the nuclear tests by China and France. We hope that the general appeal to cease all such tests will receive a positive response from these two countries.

Ecuador favoured the consensus for an indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and, at the same time, considered that this historic decision formed part of an integral unity with the principles and objectives adopted on that occasion for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and also with disarmament. In this regard, Ecuador recalls that the negotiations concerning a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty should conclude in 1996, at the latest, and that negotiations to ban fissionable materials for nuclear weapons should be scheduled shortly, with a view to achieving general and complete disarmament, pursuant the provisions of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In this context, the full enforcement of the Treaty of Tlatelolco has made Latin America a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Our region offers this example as an incentive for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in areas of greater tension.

My country applauds the agreements reached by Israel and the national Palestinian Authority, which will undoubtedly contribute to the consolidation of peace in one of the regions most stricken by insecurity, violence and armed confrontations — the Middle East. We consider that these efforts and the measures to be taken in accordance with agreements already concluded will contribute to the total pacification of this region. Consequently, Ecuador expresses to the two parties its encouragement and its confidence that, with international support, they will continue along the path of peace that they have, happily, taken.

On the other hand, we must express our deep concern about the ongoing armed actions in the former Yugoslavia, in spite of the Security Council's frequent appeals and resolutions. We believe that the Powers with higher international responsibilities should resolutely take the necessary steps to end this regrettable situation. At the same time, Ecuador wishes to join in appeals concerning the dangerous situation in Burundi, which could result in bloody events comparable to those in Rwanda.

The main purpose of the United Nations, its very reason for being, is the maintenance of international peace and security. It has been pointed out that since 1989 more than a hundred armed conflicts have erupted around the world — most of them due to domestic problems. Such situations have endangered the maintenance of international world peace and security — even world peace in some cases — showing the increasingly clear interrelationship between domestic and international affairs. That is why Ecuador believes that peace does not simply mean the absence of armed conflicts; it also comprises the political, economic and social conditions in which our peoples evolve. It should therefore be recognized that the non-military issues of human security and sustainable development have been added to the traditional security concepts.

Ecuador believes, therefore, that the United Nations, with its 50 years' experience of successes and failures, must be prepared to face the new challenges appearing throughout the world. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the international community today has more trust in the world Organization and is more often seeking more direct, more effective, intervention to reduce or resolve political, economic or social conflicts. This situation demands that the United Nations should be strengthened and restructured.

My country believes that the Security Council should be restructured to reflect adequately not only the new international world order but also the current membership of the United Nations. It should also become more capable — through the adoption of early-warning measures — of taking prompt and effective action in the fields of conflict-prevention and the continued deployment of peace-keeping operations to re-establish and consolidate peace. We do not believe that this urgent need to restructure the Council will be met by the mere inclusion of two major industrial Powers as new permanent members. When the question of increased membership is being discussed, we maintain that if the current imbalance is to be prevented from continuing to deteriorate, all geographical regions should be appropriately represented.

We disagree with the extension of the veto privilege to additional members. Since this is a mechanism created to respond to world political realities that no longer exist, the Powers possessing this privilege should willingly agree to restrict its practice exclusively to issues related to Chapter VII of the Charter. The whole world would welcome such a decision by the five permanent members as an effective step towards a more democratic United Nations.

The General Assembly, too, should be thoroughly revitalized to enable it to carry out its duties under Article 11 of the Charter in an effective and responsible manner, and so that its resolutions — in particular, those concerning issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security — may, duly observed and enforced, exercise the influence we would hope to see of resolutions of the highest political organ of the United Nations. The Economic and Social Council should also respond more adequately to the broad requirements set forth in the Charter. The Trusteeship Council has lost its significance, and should be entirely restructured. Similarly, the broad functions assigned to the Secretary-General in Article 99 of the Charter should be exercised to the fullest.

Ecuador believes it is necessary to review the structure and functions of the Bretton Woods institutions and their relations with the United Nations. In order to obtain optimal results and fully utilize existing resources, it is essential to coordinate international efforts with regard to the international monetary system and economic and social progress.

The severe financial crisis facing the United Nations could be alleviated were the Member States that are most in arrears, for various reasons, to make a sincere effort to meet their obligations. It is unacceptable to transfer the burden of resolving this crisis to the developing countries, whose weak economies cannot satisfy such demands.

Having made respect for all human rights the motto of its Government, Ecuador attaches particular importance to United Nations actions in favour of the protection and promotion of such rights. It views with great concern the massive violations of human rights and the recrudescence of what were thought to be extinct practices, such as "ethnic cleansing", which in some cases — as in the former Yugoslavia – have reached genocidal proportions, all of which constitute an unequivocal threat to international peace. Ecuador expresses its revulsion at, and condemns, attacks against civilians, especially the elderly, women and children, which are creating a growing number of refugees. Such violations are a challenge not only to the United Nations and the many valid international instruments, but to the moral conscience of all mankind.

Ecuador promotes and supports all measures designed to put a stop to this deplorable situation, to punish the guilty and to re-establish a climate of trust, harmony and peace. It believes that the international community has a clear and unavoidable responsibility in this regard. We hope that the General Assembly, and particularly the Security Council, will take the necessary steps to deal effectively with the dangerous breaches of international peace and security such violations represent. We express our confidence in and support for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and hopes that the Assembly will provide the administrative and financial resources necessary for him to carry out his important tasks to the full.

Ecuador believes that democratic systems are the proper response to peoples' yearning for freedom and fraternal coexistence and for cultural expression.

To attain the objectives of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, Ecuador, a multi-ethnic country, has submitted various concrete programmes and initiatives, in consultation with national indigenous organizations, designed to improve the economic, social and cultural status of those groups while fully respecting their distinctive characteristics. It hopes to be able to rely on international cooperation in bringing these initiatives and programmes to fruition.

In previous decades the United Nations led the struggle for the self-determination of peoples, which resulted in an end to the shameful colonial system. From the earliest years of its existence the Organization condemned the apartheid system, and it continued to do so until apartheid was abolished. The time has now come for the United Nations to fight for the realization of the right to development, based on solid economic and social foundations, implying a promise of better living conditions for millions of human beings. Stable and lasting peace can be achieved only through a sustainable and harmonious development.

That development must go hand in hand with urgent solutions to the problem of preserving the great heritage of mankind — the environment. Agenda 21, resulting from the "Earth Summit", must be complied with. To play its part, Ecuador will continue to seek international cooperation to preserve its immense ecological wealth, not only of its continental territory, but also — and particularly — in the Amazonian region and the Galapagos Islands.

In keeping with its policy of opening its economy, Ecuador has become the first new member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which enables it, *inter alia*, to benefit from the guaranteed application of the principle of non-discrimination in its trade relations with all other members, to negotiate better terms for trade in Ecuadorian goods and services, to obtain technical support and assistance and to enjoy the favourable terms of trade accorded developing countries.

My country considers that a stable relationship should be established between the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, and we therefore actively support the drafting of an agreement between these two Organizations in keeping with the Marrakech Accord and the San Francisco Charter. That could be the basis for the establishment of a new, more just and efficient international order, in which respect for the human person is guaranteed, people's welfare is fostered, economic development is shared and the balance and fairness of international trade are guaranteed, so as to create a society based on international cooperation, solidarity and interdependence.

The United Nations is called upon to perform an important task in realizing this new order. To that end, not only must the Organization as a whole be restructured, but all Member States, great and small, must offer their total political support to the United Nations.

Ecuador has always upheld its historical, Amazonian and peaceful tradition and its respect for the rule of law. It has adhered to the purposes and principles of the Charter, including non-recourse to the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any other State and the obligation to resolve international disputes exclusively through peaceful means.

Problems created by breaches of the peace occur in every part of the globe. Thus, early this year Ecuador was involuntarily involved in an unsought armed conflict of unpredictable consequences with its southern neighbour, Peru. The Secretary- General of the United Nations and the Organization's Member States were informed of this unfortunate conflict, which arose out of the territorial problem that has for decades soured relations between our two countries. A peaceful, just and definitive solution of this controversy is a necessity not only for our two nations, but also for peaceful coexistence in Latin America. My Government has always sought to avoid such conflict through diplomatic channels. The actions taken by the guarantor countries under the Rio Protocol of 1942 were extremely important in arriving at a cease-fire during the military confrontation and in leading to the pacification process agreed to in the Itamaraty Peace Declaration of 17 February 1995 and ratified in the Montevideo Declaration of 28 February. This process has gradually led to the restoration of peace. We trust that, with the assistance of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States, and their military observers still deployed in the conflict area, the aspirations of the Ecuadorian and Peruvian peoples will be fulfilled and that a definitive solution to the problem on the terms that I have mentioned will be achieved.

The action taken by the guarantor countries regarding the conflict between Ecuador and Peru has proved particularly effective, and we are certain it will lead to a total normalization of relations between Ecuador and Peru. At the recent meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Rio Group, held last 4 and 5 September, there were important signs of relaxation of tension in the statements made by the Heads of State of both countries as well as in the encouraging positions of the other countries, which we believe, provide not only a clear orientation towards peace but also support for complete peaceful coexistence, while at the same time creating a space for dialogue, constructive negotiations and a resumption of the integrationist processes that serve to consolidate peace. All this, moreover, will clear a sure path towards cooperation, in various spheres of our relations with our neighbours and

with other countries, with mutual respect and understanding. I believe we have begun to move towards a better understanding, and if we prepare a framework of good will we will be able not only to bring our divergent positions closer together but also to reach agreements for lasting solutions.

The problems threatening international peace — which arouse natural fears, create anxiety, work against the people's well-being, cause enormous losses of human life and bring about an immense deterioration of social and economic development — are no doubt the gravest problems, and they call for action for peace by all means possible. They are deep-rooted problems that require a positive response from international organizations, both global and regional, when their assistance is needed to solve such problems.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Mr. László Kovács.

Mr. Kovács (Hungary): May I extend our congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election as President of the General Assembly at this historic fiftieth session. The delegation of Hungary stands ready to do its fair share in assisting you in the fulfilment of your important responsibilities.

The 50-year-old United Nations is a living witness to our successes and failures. In many quarters, the question is raised whether the United Nations has a credibility problem at this important juncture of its history. We have to remind ourselves that the capacity of the United Nations to act is nothing but the reflection of the will and determination of its Member States. With the euphoria over the end of the cold war gone, we ought to take a hard look at the role the United Nations is called upon to play in a dramatically altered, often fluid international environment where shared values may not automatically yield converging interests.

The Charter provides us with valuable guidance for distinguishing sound international order and stability from the expedience of appeasement. The question is whether the international community is always ready to act accordingly by taking a firm stand against aggression, heinous crimes against humanity and flagrant infringements on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of millions of individuals around the globe.

We believe that there can be no place for complacency when we witness devastating wars, lawlessness, the suffering of civilian populations and widespread human misery. There is no positive answer to the question whether, in spite of the absence of the threat of a new world catastrophe, we can keep our planet safe and secure. A fundamentally changed global political environment, as bipolarism fades away, cannot prevent the outbreak of local wars, internal conflicts or ethnic strife. The values and principles we hold so dear seem to be distant dreams against the backdrop of horrors occurring in places remote for some, but dangerously close to others.

Mr. Odlum (Saint Lucia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have come to realize the growing importance of effective regional tools in addressing this new type of mostly internal conflicts, where the rule of law and accountable national administrations are often non-existent, where warlords and other unscrupulous leaders lead campaigns of intimidation, "ethnic cleansing" and genocide in an atmosphere of nationalism and hatred. Throughout the years, the United Nations has achieved a number of important successes by brokering peace agreements, conducting peace-keeping operations, improving humanitarian situations and promoting national reconciliation.

The world Organization is better equipped to deal with traditional conflict situations. However, it has yet to prepare itself for meeting all the new and alarming challenges. While the United Nations cannot realistically manage all the crises occurring world wide, because of its unique role and responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security, it should seek to strengthen global political consensus on the principles of the Charter, assist, through its preventive capacity, in the formulation of regional strategies and efforts and take decisive action when regional or global security is seriously challenged.

Today's conflicts call for a more coherent yet decentralized United Nations response capability. Streamlining and rationalizing the Organization should be the order of the day, not only to eliminate waste and overlap, but also to make the best use of existing political and financial resources. We also fully support the Secretary-General's efforts to improve coordination between United Nations organs and agencies with a view to enhancing the early-warning, stand-by and rapid-reaction capacities of the Organization, which should focus on all the political, security, social, economic-

ecological, humanitarian and human rights areas of United Nations activity.

As regards the reform efforts in general, one should bear in mind that agreement on such diverse issues as the elimination of the enemy-States clause from the Charter or the reform of the financing of peace-keeping operations cannot be achieved overnight. We hope that the establishment of an open-ended working group of the General Assembly, chaired by its President, will be an important milestone in this highly complex endeavour. We welcome the important measures already implemented and are looking forward to others which are designed to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the functioning of the Security Council.

The main mission of the United Nations is to make the world a safer place for all. After a series of United Nations conferences on the most important global problems, such as environment, human rights, population and social development, and the recently concluded World Conference on Women, we ought to focus our attention on the practical implementation of their recommendations.

Earlier this year the international community extended for an indefinite period the validity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Hungary had supported from the very beginning the idea of indefinite extension, for we are convinced that this major international instrument promotes stability by preventing the spread of the nuclear arsenal and at the same time aims at the orderly development of nuclear cooperation for peaceful purposes. We hope that the security guarantees given to the non-nuclear States by the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as the prospects of a thorough review of the operation of the Treaty — including the obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament, especially the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty — will open up further possibilities for progress in this area.

The tragedy in the former Yugoslavia has revealed, not only where brutality and the trampling of elementary norms of international law and human behaviour can lead, but also the devastating consequences of unwillingness to enforce the legitimate decisions of the international community. What we have seen was that the Security Council, and consequently the United Nations as a whole, was either unable or unwilling to follow through its own resolutions, thus leaving the initiative to those whose only argument was and is naked force and the policy of the *fait accompli*. The crisis in the Balkans is a serious and tragic reminder that the Security Council can preserve its authority and credibility only if there is a unity of action which ensures the full and timely implementation of its resolutions. Another important lesson to be drawn from the handling of this crisis is that adequate early-warning and preventive machineries should be put in place to forestall the eruption of further tragedies and conflicts.

The Republic of Hungary, being a neighbouring country to three of the new States that emerged on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, is vitally interested in peaceful and good-neighbourly cooperation with all of them and in the early settlement of the conflict by political means, on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter, international law and the resolutions of the Security Council. In our view, a visible and credible international presence, backed up by international resolve to guarantee the implementation of decisions taken, is essential for this purpose. We believe that no comprehensive and lasting arrangements can be worked out for this conflict if two, so far quite neglected, factors are not taken fully into account.

First, any solution should incorporate the human rights dimension, including effective guarantees for minority rights in accordance with international standards. In this regard, I would like to pay tribute to the former Special Rapporteur for the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, for his untiring efforts consistently to uphold the values of our civilization. Neither massive economic assistance, nor a huge international presence can make a real difference if the human rights questions are left unaddressed.

Secondly, the security of the subregion, and, indeed, of Europe as a whole, is threatened by massive arms stockpiles, mostly left over from the previous period, when the former Yugoslavia — not being a party to the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) — maintained significant armed forces, in fact, one of the relatively largest in Europe. It is of vital importance, therefore, to work out, in the context of the settlement, arrangements to reduce conventional armaments on the territory of former Yugoslavia.

The acquisition of territory by force and the accompanying abhorrent phenomenon of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia led to the destruction of entire regions. It triggered a forced population movement unseen in Europe since the Second World War. Today, when we are about to enter the fifth year of the war and the diplomatic efforts to find a solution are

continuing, we should not lose sight of political responsibilities and personal accountabilities for the initiation of this drama. The sick ideas of ethnically pure, homogenous, single-nation States had started a vicious cycle of vengeance that claimed the lives of over 100,000 people and forced millions of others to flee, many of them seeking refuge in neighbouring and other countries. In this regard, the settlement of refugees in new areas traditionally inhabited by other national minorities in order to change their century-old ethnic composition is contrary to international law. It is even more so if it is being conducted by forcible means and through intimidation, as has happened to the Croat and Hungarian minorities in the Vojvodina province of Serbia.

The Government of Hungary has, on several occasions, expressed its grave concern about the negative impact of the conflict on the ethnic composition of the population concerned. From this rostrum, I should like to call the attention of the international community again to the need to elaborate a comprehensive settlement, in the framework of which the question of the refugees should be so resolved as to respect the interests of each and every ethnic community. Any settlement must include the development and implementation of agreements that ensure the survival of these communities, respect their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including minority rights, and encourage the establishment of institutions that guarantee those rights in the long run.

The issue of human rights and fundamental freedoms remains in the forefront of our attention. Protection and promotion of these rights is not only a voluntarily undertaken obligation of all Members of the United Nations, but a responsibility the implementation of which can be legitimately scrutinized by the international community. In Vienna, we closed the debate on the universality of human rights by adopting the document of the World Conference on Human Rights and restating universality in its own right as our guiding principle since the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The legitimate role of the United Nations acting in defence of human rights should therefore be supported and strengthened.

With renewed waves of human rights violations occurring worldwide, mostly in internal conflicts or ethnic strife, our Organization has to step up its early-warning and preventive capacities, develop an integrated response mechanism encompassing field visits and monitors, a closer integration of the human rights element in peace-keeping activities and ensuring effective interaction in the implementation of political, peace-keeping, human rights and humanitarian mandates. International presence, particularly preventive protection, is a most efficient deterrent in curbing violations and preventing their escalation.

The establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) was built on the premise of giving more coherence and visibility to human rights activities within the United Nations system. However, our commitment to human rights rings hollow without constant efforts to improve the efficiency of the United Nations human rights machinery, focusing on prevention, on-site monitoring and developing a rapid-response capacity.

May I now address the General Assembly in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE has significantly developed on both political and operational levels since the December 1994 Budapest summit. As the OSCE, a regional organization in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter, embarks on so-far-uncharted waters in conflict prevention and crisis management, the advice and assistance of the United Nations proves to be an important asset, for which I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General.

Based on the agreement concluded between the two organizations, we have indeed developed flexible forms of cooperation, not only in the political area, but in our joint efforts on humanitarian issues, human rights, sanctions-monitoring and operational presence.

At present, the OSCE has missions in Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Estonia, Latvia and Chechnya. We are also about to establish one in Croatia. We find it indispensable that the OSCE mission to Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) resume its activities, in accordance with the relevant resolution of the Security Council.

Though the mandates of these OSCE missions vary, they still point in the same direction, namely assisting the parties involved in finding a political solution to their differences on the basis of OSCE principles and commitments. OSCE helps to monitor and verify cease-

fire accords, supervise troop withdrawals, establish negotiating structures and principles for talks on national reconciliation and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has to be added that in some cases the OSCE has to work hard to obtain the necessary political endorsement of the parties to engage in a peaceful and structured political process and offer mutual concessions.

I wish to express our appreciation of the peace efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina which, in this very city of New York only two days ago, yielded the so-called "further agreed basic principles". As its Chairman-in-Office, I can see that it is extremely important that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe may soon find itself in a new, important and challenging role as an active participant in the course of the implementation of the long-awaited Bosnian peace accords.

In making use of the mutually reinforcing capabilities of the United Nations and the OSCE, the Hungarian Chairmanship-in-Office of the organization for 1995 is determined to strengthen both organizations. I remain convinced that the further development of this cooperation in the vast area from Alaska to Kamchatka will, with the active support of Members, bring us closer to the realization of the noble ideals set forth in the Charter 50 years ago.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, His Excellency Mr. Kasem Kasemsri.

Mr. Kasemsri (Thailand): On behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Freitas do Amaral, upon his election to the presidency of this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that under his leadership the work and achievements of this session will be as momentous as the occasion we are celebrating.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. My delegation truly appreciates his leadership and his tireless dedication to the heavy responsibilities entrusted to him during the past year. Under his guidance, the forty-ninth session not only set the stage for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations but also helped to reinforce its foundation and crystallized its agenda for the years to come.

As this is the first time that I have had the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of my Government and the people of Thailand in my capacity as Foreign Minister, I should like to reiterate my Government's full and unflinching support for the purposes and principles of the United Nations and its all-encompassing work and endeavours. As a representative of a democratically elected Government, I am particularly pleased to note the increased role and involvement of the United Nations in promoting the principles and practices of democracy. Thailand believes that, as a global organization, the United Nations has an important role to play in advancing the concept of democracy and enhancing its principles in world affairs, as well as in the functions of the United Nations itself. It is with this conviction, therefore, that I should like to pledge Thailand's fullest support for United Nations undertakings in this field.

During the past few years, much has been said on the need to strengthen and revitalize the United Nations for the next 50 years, to prepare it for the challenges of the new century which will soon dawn upon us. Through the years, a number of useful proposals and recommendations on ways to improve the structure, working methods, efficiency and agenda of the United Nations have been made by numerous experts, practitioners and enthusiasts, from both within and outside the United Nations system. Yet much remains to be done if the United Nations is to be, in the words of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a "mission-driven and result-oriented" Organization.

In this regard, Thailand believes that a number of crucial ingredients are necessary to effectuate a successful reform of the United Nations system. Most important, the reform must be comprehensive and universal. The reform process should take place in all agencies within the United Nations system, encompassing all aspects of the work and activities of the United Nations. A special effort should be made to coordinate all reform initiatives, particularly in three main organs of the United Nations, namely the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. For this reason, Thailand fully supports the General Assembly's decision earlier this month to establish a high-level open-ended working group on the strengthening of the United Nations system in order to review and make observations on reform proposals attained from various sources.

In line with this initiative, I should like to go a step further and propose that, in addition to the high-level

open-ended Working Group, a focal point could be designated to coordinate all reform initiatives in all United Nations bodies. However, such a focal point need not supersede or subsume existing reform mechanisms, such as the High-Level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the Organization, the ad hoc open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development, and the Open-Ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. All these bodies should coexist and coordinate with one another, and complement each other's work.

Having been a United Nations Member since 1946, Thailand shares the aspirations of all its fellow Members to see a more consolidated, cohesive and efficient United Nations system — one which would be able to fulfil the noble purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; to deal urgently and effectively with threats to international peace and security; to respond effectively to the world's economic, social and humanitarian needs; and to promote the goals of human security and sustainable development. Furthermore, Thailand is convinced that one must also ensure that the United Nations of the twenty-first century is more equitable, representative, democratic, transparent and accountable, allowing for the widest possible participation in all its decision-making and activities and serving the interests of all mankind.

When speaking of these qualities, one is inclined to ponder the work on the reform of the Security Council. As the main organ entrusted with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council must be restructured in such a way that it will be able to perform its duties effectively, while also ensuring its legitimacy and accountability. To achieve this goal, the reformed working methods and composition of the Security Council should allow for the widest participation by Member States, particularly those that are developing countries, while at the same time giving due recognition to States whose present world positions reflect the current global shift in power and influence.

However, to simply reform the Security Council through its composition and working methods alone is not enough. If the Security Council is to be truly efficient and effective, we also need to rethink the way in which we view the role of the Security Council. We need to be more realistic in our expectations about what the Security Council should do and should be able to accomplish in a conflict situation. In other words, it is about time we considered limiting the scope and depth of the peace-keeping activities of the United Nations to a level where its involvement would be practical, meaningful and cost-effective.

For this reason, my delegation welcomes the point raised by His Excellency Professor Dr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, on the need to re-examine the United Nations general policy on peace-keeping. My delegation also welcomes the efforts being made in the Fifth Committee to reform the process of approving peace-keeping budgets and appropriations, which would help improve the management of the United Nations financial resources. My delegation is convinced that it would make good managerial sense for us to try to curtail the dramatic increase in the expenses of United Nations peace-keeping and related operations, which, in 1995, have grown to over $3 billion and are currently contributing to the United Nations financial difficulty.

It is one thing to discuss United Nations efforts in maintaining international peace and security in financial and managerial terms and another to view them from the human perspective. The tribal, ethnic and religious conflicts that are the source of the ongoing hostilities in places such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, Lebanon and Cyprus existed long before the end of the cold war, many of them even long before the United Nations came into existence. There is not much the United Nations can do as long as the peoples involved have no desire to coexist in peace. That is why Thailand fully supports the United Nations continuing work on the Agenda for Peace, initiated by the United Nations Secretary-General in 1992. In particular, Thailand believes that the concepts of preventive diplomacy and confidence-building, as espoused by the initiative, could do much to promote peace and understanding in all regions of the world.

Along this line, Thailand and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have, since 1971, initiated the concept of a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in South-East Asia (ZOPFAN), the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in 1976, and, most notably, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, involving 18 States from the Asia-Pacific region and the European Union. It is most gratifying that, after two years of existence, the ARF has increasingly proved to be a useful instrument of peace and understanding and has made significant contributions to efforts towards preventive diplomacy and confidence-building in the Asia-Pacific region.

During the past year, a number of important developments have taken place within the realm of the global economy. The establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), although still in its initial stage, augurs well for the eventual realization of a transparent, balanced and effective world trading regime. Continued efforts should be made to integrate major trading economies, as well as those in transition, into the WTO framework in order to more fully to globalize the norms and practices of free and fair trade.

Similarly, the conclusion of the Uruguay Round agreements provided hope for a more equitable and open global trading system. It is essential that these agreements be implemented in full as soon as possible. It is essential also that States parties refrain from using unilateral and arbitrary measures, which would be contrary to the spirit and provisions of the agreements and obstruct the free flow of trade between States and regions. The sad reality is that, in spite of the agreements, trading States, such as Thailand, still suffer from unilateral and arbitrary measures in areas such as agriculture, textiles and light-manufacture products.

For this reason, Thailand believes that further discussions and negotiations on the accelerated implementation of the Uruguay Round commitments and related issues are still necessary. Efforts should also be made to ensure that the outcome of these discussions and negotiations would make it possible to strike a balance between the interests and concerns of developing countries and that of their more developed counterparts. Thailand further believes that to this end, United Nations institutions such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) can play a major role in amalgamating, and giving expression to, the interests and concerns of all involved, particularly those of the developing, and least developed, members of the world economy.

Global trade agreements are not the only ones that bring countries closer together. Another welcome development in the international economy is the closer cooperation among regional and subregional economic groupings. The linkages among these entities in various parts of the world have, in effect, created a network of interdependence that has tremendous potential and would benefit all concerned. However, continued care must be exercised to make certain that these groupings will not turn inward and become mutually exclusive regional trading blocs. Such a development would be detrimental to the spirit of multilateralism that has been fostered by this body for the past 50 years and to the world's trading system.

While economic cooperation within a regional context such as ASEAN has become commonplace, it is noteworthy that cooperative frameworks now span the divide of North and South, East and West. Oceans are no longer a separation. Efforts such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the ASEAN-European Union promise to forge closer economic cooperation across the regions, regardless of geographical distance and boundaries. As these growing networks of cooperation extend their reach across the globe and transoceanic trade multiplies, geographical and economic distinctions become increasingly irrelevant. The sharp dividing lines between the rich and the poor, the Western and the Eastern hemispheres, are indeed diminishing.

Sustainable economic development must go hand in hand with sustainable human development. There can be no prosperity as long as people are denied their basic rights and the satisfaction of their needs. As a country that attaches high importance to the principles of social equity, social welfare and human rights, Thailand fully supports the United Nations efforts in areas such as the alleviation of poverty, education, health care and the combating of drug abuse and trafficking. Drug trafficking, in particular, has always received special attention from Thailand. Geographically located near the so-called "golden triangle", Thailand has consistently supported, at both the global and the regional level, international efforts aimed at the prevention, control and suppression of narcotic drugs. This support has been intensified in recent years with the advent of the twentieth-century epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Thailand believes that like the drug problem, the disease, with its devastating effects on mankind, is of global concern and should be dealt with jointly by the international community. In this context, my delegation would like to voice its support for the United Nations ongoing work on initiatives relating to the Agenda for Development, which would help us find more pragmatic approaches to development and address the aforementioned economic, social and human security issues in all their dimensions in a more effective and fruitful manner.

In spite of the many achievements of the United Nations during the past 50 years, in the year 1995, we still find ourselves far away from what the authors of the United Nations Charter had hoped for and dreamed of in 1945. Therefore, in this fiftieth anniversary year, it is most appropriate that we, the peoples of the United Nations, rededicate ourselves to the realization of the hopes and dreams of the framers of the United Nations

Charter, for our own sake and for the sake of our children. Through the years, we have asked and taken much from the United Nations. We continue to do so with much greater intensity and in much greater multitude. It is now time for us to reinvest in the United Nations. We must give back not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. Imperfect as it is, there is no substitute for the United Nations.

The generation of the Second World War created the United Nations for us. They lit for us all a beacon of hope. It is now our responsibility to bequeath to our posterity a brighter beacon, a revitalized and strengthened United Nations which would withstand the test of time and help us overcome the challenges of the next century.

The Acting President: The next speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Cooperation of Luxembourg, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Poos, on whom I now call.

Mr. Poos (Luxembourg) *(interpretation from French):* Like previous speakers, I should like to convey to the President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly our warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the Assembly. As a representative of a country close to us, Portugal, he will, I am certain, discharge skilfully and effectively his difficult responsibilities in leading our deliberations.

The President of our Council, Mr. Javier Solana, has recently explained the position of the European Union on the work of the United Nations and on the major challenges it is called upon to face. Those are also the views of my delegation. I welcome the promising prospects opening up in the Balkans and the Middle East. As for Chechnya, I must, on the other hand, regret that the parties have been lagging behind in restoring peace to that sorely tried region in the past year.

In the former Yugoslavia, dramatic developments in recent months have changed substantially the nature of the conflict there. After years of civil war, atrocities and "ethnic cleansing", we now see a glimmer of hope emerging. I welcome the recent agreements in Geneva between the warring parties, as well as that on the opening up of Sarajevo, which was arrived at thanks to the mediation efforts and the commitment of the American special envoy, Mr. Richard Holbrooke. I am, however, not unaware of the fact that negotiations on a comprehensive settlement will be lengthy and that its implementation will be a difficult task.

The Government of Luxembourg is prepared to take part in the reconstruction effort as long as certain conditions are met: the effective implementation of a comprehensive settlement, the implementation of a disarmament plan and respect for human rights and for minorities, including the right of return.

In the Middle East, negotiations for the conclusion of a second agreement on the autonomy of the occupied territories have just been concluded. Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres, as well as Mr. Arafat, have shown exemplary tenacity and political will, and they deserve our warmest congratulations.

We are all called upon to help in the success of this vast endeavour for peace now under way. My Government has launched an important action for cooperation in development in the occupied territories. It will also send observers to the forthcoming elections, which will be the decisive test for the creation of a civil and democratic society.

My country notes with satisfaction the indefinite extension last May of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It appeals urgently to the nuclear-weapon Powers to renounce any new testing and to comply with the current moratorium. Such a decision would help to create a climate favourable to the conclusion in 1996 of a global treaty on the banning of nuclear testing, one which is suitably verifiable.

The Fourth World Conference on Women has just concluded in Beijing. My Government commends the progress achieved at that Conference. It hails the fact that, for the first time, the rights of women are recognized as an integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In particular, we have in mind the recognition of the right of all women to control their sexual health and their access, on an equal footing, to economic resources. The "right to be different" claimed by religious fundamentalists should not hamper the implementation of these new principles.

The events of some time ago led us to believe that the old bipolar world was a thing of the past and that a new world order was automatically about to succeed it. Unfortunately, reality has not confirmed that hope. The multipolar world in which we live has not at all become more unified, nor more supportive, nor safer. Ethnic conflicts have broken out in many parts of the world. Narrow-minded nationalism has gained adherents, and political and religious intolerance is spreading.

We thought that with increased international cooperation, the role of multinational organizations would increase. This has not always been the case. Often, the role of our Organization has been ill perceived or badly presented to the public.

In many cases, the image given of the United Nations seems unfair. It does not take into account the many constraints under which the United Nations functions. Very often, the critics are aiming at the wrong target, forgetting that it is Member States that prevent the United Nations either from taking decisions or by acting, by denying it the necessary resources.

The political commitment of Member States is often not commensurate with the ever-growing responsibilities of the United Nations.

Our Organization must then today come to grips with a new situation arising from the fact that most current conflicts take place within the borders of a single State, and no longer pit States against each other. Intervention constitutes an interference that only the United Nations can legitimize.

These ethnic or religious conflicts, whose origins derive from economic and social issues, are the result not only of regular armies, but of militias and clans. The civilian population is often the first victim, if not the main target.

The missions demanded of the United Nations are also becoming more and more complex, difficult and dangerous. The United Nations is called upon to maintain peace, but often there is no peace to keep.

The United Nations has none the less had a number of successes which have been important but which the media have tended to minimize, be they in Namibia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique or Haiti. In those countries, the United Nations has helped peoples to overcome years of civil war and to channel their energies into building democratic nations.

These positive and courageous actions contrast with other, rather timid reactions to conflicts that threaten the lives of thousands of civilians and expose them to terrible violations of their basic rights. This was the case in Rwanda and was long also the case in the former Yugoslavia, even if the international community has provided substantial humanitarian assistance and helped to ease the suffering of the victims. But as long as the United Nations does not adopt a more defined and resolute approach that would allow it to prevent such catastrophes, the effectiveness and credibility of our Organization run the risk of being called into question.

As I have just emphasized with regard to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, we must learn from our failures and near-successes. My country encourages efforts to provide the United Nations with its own rapid-reaction capacity. But the Organization should also determine whether increased cooperation with specialized regional organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or the European Union, might not in certain cases be both more effective and more economical. At any rate, any new United Nations operation should be established only on the basis of a military appraisal as well. Furthermore, the United Nations should see to it that the commanders of an operation are given sufficient military resources and clear, consistent political guidelines.

Our era has witnessed spectacular developments at the national level. The concept of the State has been called into question as both a mechanism for solving national problems and a basic element of the international system. States find themselves increasingly threatened with disintegration, their citizens seeking to escape the oppression of rigid structures and demanding to become part of ever more narrowly defined ethnic groups.

In such a context, democracy would seem to be the best means of ensuring the viability of the State as manager of public affairs and guarantor of progress. At the national level, democracy provides the stability necessary for peace by ensuring respect for human rights and allowing the population to express its will. At the regional level, as in Europe, it involves States, large and small, in joint decision-making and contributes to development by encouraging cooperation and fostering peace. Democratic States do not war with each other.

It is thus an important duty of the international community to promote democracy among and within States by helping them to build a democratic system; by providing them with logistical and technical support for the organization of free elections; by promoting the creation of a public sector to guarantee the proper management of State affairs; and by providing the various sectors of civil society with the resources to consolidate the bases of democracy. The Government of Luxembourg provides tangible support to the activities of our Organization in this sphere.

In our view, the promotion of human rights is another priority area. In particular, the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child represents a large step forward. This Convention is a valuable instrument that helps to protect children from physical and mental abuse. It is therefore essential for Governments that have ratified the Convention to adopt and implement the necessary national legislation. The General Assembly has initiated international activity on behalf of millions of street children. My Government proposes that a similar effort be undertaken to assist millions of children who work by necessity or even compulsion.

It is unacceptable, indeed intolerable, that at the end of the twentieth century more than a billion people live in abject poverty and almost 1.5 billion men, women and children lack sufficient food and drinking water and have no access to education or the most elementary health care. To be sure, certain parts of the South today are enjoying remarkable development. But others, on the African continent in particular, seem to have been left behind by the progress from which the world economy as a whole has benefited.

It is also alarming that inequalities both within countries and between the countries of the South and the North are growing rather than shrinking, and that the richest fifth of mankind owns more than four-fifths of the world's social product while the poorest fifth must content itself with 1.4 per cent.

As concerns the developing countries, we have a duty to be supportive. This support should supplement and strengthen the efforts which these countries must undertake at the national level. Luxembourg has doubled its development assistance in just a few years. It has committed itself to the goal of achieving 0.7 per cent in official development assistance before the end of the century. It would also like to see new progress achieved in reducing the debt that continues to paralyse the development of many developing countries.

Our Organization must play a central role as the major institution for international cooperation at the global level. This was in fact envisaged by our Charter. The Preamble stresses the need to promote "the economic and social advancement of all peoples" and thereby makes development one of the principal goals of our Organization.

Fifty years after the creation of the United Nations, we believe that the time has come to begin an in-depth review of the activities and structures of the Organization in the economic and social spheres, taking into account the far-reaching changes that have occurred and the growing globalization of problems. This review should take cognizance of the fact that countries are being faced with new phenomena that are often diverse but are alike in reaching beyond national borders.

I am thinking, *inter alia*, of such health problems as AIDS or of such environmental problems as the depletion of the ozone layer and global warming. There are also such social phenomena as population growth, the pressure of migration, the problem of refugees, and violations of human rights. Other trans-border issues that are of increasing concern are drug trafficking, and new forms of violence and crime and even international terrorism.

We need an effective system built on these realities and better able to take into account the interests of all mankind, the poorest in particular. Such a system should be able to define integrated policies and lay down clear, coherent guidelines. Cooperation between international financial institutions and the United Nations system should be organized with this in view.

Only the United Nations has the necessary legitimacy and authority for such reform. The work of renewal and clarification that has begun with the Agenda for Development is a natural component of this global perspective. My country, together with its partners in the European Union, intends to make an active contribution to the discussion to be held on this subject.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, several focus groups have considered the challenges facing humanity and the ability of the United Nations to meet them. In particular, I would refer to the Carlsson-Ramphal Commission, which submitted the report entitled "On Global Governance", and an independent working group on the future of the United Nations which the Secretary-General himself established and which delivered the results of its study last June. These two reports set forth a number of potential reforms and make concrete proposals, including one to create an economic security council.

I believe that these proposals are a valuable source of inspiration and make an important contribution to the reform work that should be pursued and intensified. I attach great importance to the consideration of these reports, which our Assembly has entrusted to the high-level Working Group recently set up in the framework of the strengthening of the United Nations system.

Before concluding I should like to deal with two issues concerning the reform process begun by the Organization — expanding the Security Council, and putting the finances of the United Nations on a sound footing.

The Security Council today is invested with enormous responsibilities. Its decisions commit all Member States and have a decisive impact on the fate of millions of human beings. The Security Council must therefore reflect as faithfully as possible the determination of the international community as a whole. A Security Council more representative of today's world would strengthen the legitimacy of its actions and facilitate the implementation of its decisions.

My Government is in favour of a balanced increase that would involve the admission to the Council of new permanent and non-permanent members from both the North and the South. In particular we would like permanent-member status to be acknowledged for economic Powers whose positive role in international affairs has long been recognized.

The improved representativeness of the Security Council cannot be achieved only by remaking its membership: it also requires greater transparency in its decision-making processes. Dialogue with other Members of the Organization, especially those countries that contribute troops for peace-keeping operations, must be enhanced.

Finally, the time has come to delete from the Charter references to "enemy States" which have not existed for a long time now.

Each and every one of us is aware of the seriousness of the financial crisis that the Organization faces. It results not only from sums disbursed, which are relatively speaking very modest if we compare them to sums invested elsewhere. It results essentially from the failure of Member States which fulfil inadequately, if at all, their obligation to pay their contributions to the budget of the Organization. Each and every State is bound under the Charter to pay its contributions on time and in full.

The Luxembourg Government is in favour of a monitoring mechanism that would ensure the proper management of the United Nations system.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, Member States should endeavour to define an approach that could confer on the Organization new legitimacy and credibility for the next century. This will succeed only if they involve in this effort representatives of civil society and, in particular, those of non-governmental organizations.

But in the final analysis the proper functioning and efficiency of the United Nations depend first and foremost on the political support that Member States, especially the most powerful, give to multilateralism, as well as the political, military and financial resources they are prepared to make available to international organizations.

The Acting President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, His Excellency the Right Honourable Donald Charles McKinnon.

Mr. McKinnon (New Zealand): May I first take this occasion to congratulate Ambassador Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the presidency of the Assembly in this important fiftieth anniversary year.

I should also like to offer a special welcome to Palau as the one hundred eighty-fifth Member. Palau's accession does signal honour to us as a fellow Pacific State.

Here today I want to talk about making our global neighbourhood a safer place for all of us; the progress that has been made in the years since the end of the cold war, and what still needs to be done. Memories are short; it is hard to recall the degree of mutual suspicion that coloured global politics just a few years ago.

We have made great strides in recent times. The world community has achieved much in its efforts to make the world safer, and more stable. But we need to move on to reinforce our achievements in controlling, reducing and abolishing the horrific weapons of mass destruction. We have yet to see the dividend we all expected to flow from the end of the cold war.

The transition to a post-cold-war world is not easy. We are painfully aware of that. In recent years though, we have been encouraged to believe that a new world order was achievable. One of the reasons for this hope, this optimism, was that the nuclear scourge had receded. For the first time in 50 years nuclear Powers were committed to build down rather than to build up, to

decommission and destroy rather than to commission and construct.

However, recent events have cast a cloud over that brief period of optimism. New Zealand does not believe that continued nuclear testing, wherever it takes place, contributes to a safer world. On the contrary, nuclear testing sends the wrong message to States which do possess or which aspire to the possession of nuclear weapons. It also tells them that the development of these weapons is still acceptable.

The nuclear tests which have taken place since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was extended have disturbed the delicate balance achieved at that Conference. New Zealand believed then, and continues to believe, that indefinite extension was the right option. The world needs a strong non-proliferation regime, one that cannot be called into question by changing global circumstances. But the Conference went further than that, the vast majority of participants making it very clear that they were against nuclear testing. They also wanted to move towards the nuclear-free world envisaged in article VI of the Treaty. The cavalier disregard, and dismissal of the views of the many, has led to considerable disillusionment. It will take a long time to restore the trust that had been there.

New Zealand and the rest of the South Pacific region have long stood tall and proud in opposition to nuclear weapons and their testing. We abhor testing wherever it occurs. But the decision to resume testing in what we see as our home region has particularly angered the people of New Zealand. The leaders of the South Pacific Forum nations expressed their outrage at their meeting just two weeks ago. They were able to recall the painful memories in the region, going back to atmospheric testing conducted between 25 and 50 years ago.

The South Pacific has not been alone in its opposition to nuclear testing. Governments, parliamentarians and peoples from every region of the world have spoken up in anger, alarm and dismay. The two Governments which are continuing to test nuclear weapons must heed the voice of the international community. They are dancing to a tune no one wants to hear.

In these circumstances, New Zealand, along with a representative group of like-minded States, will submit an appropriate draft resolution to the First Committee of this Assembly.

Testing is a backward step, and I condemn it. It is not too late. All that China and France need to do is listen to international opinion and announce that their testing programmes have ceased.

I want to welcome the commitment by three of the nuclear-weapon States — France, the United Kingdom and the United States — to a genuine ban on nuclear testing: a prohibition on any nuclear explosions, no matter how small. This is what we have always called for: a comprehensive ban — where the word "comprehensive" means just that. We are pleased that it is attracting serious support.

New Zealand calls on the two nuclear-weapon States that have not yet indicated full support for this approach to do so quickly. Time is short. The deadline for the negotiations is 1996, and the international community is holding the Conference on Disarmament accountable for meeting that deadline and producing a treaty that is genuinely comprehensive in scope.

In this regard, the General Assembly has become increasingly concerned about the lack of accountability in the Conference on Disarmament. Limited and unrepresentative membership has been a large part of the problem. Enlargement is long overdue. New Zealand welcomes the progress made in recent weeks in Geneva, and we express our gratitude to Morocco for its efforts in this regard.

However, the real test will be whether by the time we meet here again next year the new members will have been able to take their seats. For the moment, the outcome is still not satisfactory. I recall that democratic representation was once at the heart of a tea party in Boston. Let us hope that there will not be a tea party in New York in 1996 on membership of the Conference on Disarmament.

I also urge the members of the Conference on Disarmament to look beyond the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. New Zealand wants to see an international agreement banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. That would be another important step towards negotiations on the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to resolve its procedural differences and get the negotiations under way.

I should add that at the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-

Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons we raised the idea of negotiating an agreement to ban the future production of nuclear weapons. That could take us a step closer to eliminating the nuclear threat.

But it is also important to address the issues relating to conventional weapons.

I wish, first, to address the issue of land-mines. I want to congratulate the Secretary-General and his staff for the way they have picked up this issue and raised public awareness around the world. The Conference organized in Geneva this year was most timely — but more is needed. Both financial and technical resources need to be made available to help dispose of the millions of treacherous life- and livelihood-destroying mines that have already been laid. I pledge New Zealand's ongoing assistance in this work.

Of course, disposal alone is not the answer. Urgent progress needs to be made to deal with these hideous weapons, which go on claiming the lives of innocent people — farmers, their children, shopkeepers, collectors of wood, carriers of water — long after conflicts have ceased. I ask all the participants at the Conference which opened this week in Vienna, which has as its main aim the revision of international law on land-mines, to work together to achieve the tightest possible restrictions on these totally indiscriminate weapons. I want to work to eliminate them entirely from the world's armouries.

This leads one to the broader questions of arms transfers. We are profoundly disturbed at the unnecessary and irrational increase in arms transfers. At a time when, globally, resources are desperately needed for development, for the environment, for health, why is it that even modest measures, such as enhancing the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms are still being resisted?

Neither peace nor development is advanced if States put increasingly scarce economic resources into the defence sectors of their economies. Far too much of the global economic capacity is going into armaments when the citizens of the world desperately need better health, better education and a better future for their children.

The widespread availability of conventional arms and the resurgence of ethnic nationalism have, together, produced a very dangerous cocktail, which poses a major threat to stability in the post-cold-war era. The need for Member States to maintain a collective approach in addressing these challenges has never been greater.

Events in the former Yugoslavia over the past year have presented an enormous challenge to the international community. New Zealand fully supported the firm response made by this Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the murderous shelling of Sarajevo late in August. The diplomatic efforts now under way, including the very important constitutional agreement reached last Tuesday, offer some prospect for bringing to an end almost four years of a most appalling conflict.

Some have been dismissive of the achievements of the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia. That, however, is to overlook the saving of tens of thousands of lives and the substantial relief of suffering. This is why New Zealand, despite its geographical distance from the region, has been willing to play its part. I believe that, one day, the United Nations mission in Bosnia will enjoy recognition of the successes it has achieved so far.

It is a little too easy to focus on the problems of the United Nations. We need to remember its successes as well. I think of Cambodia and Mozambique, of El Salvador and Haiti, of Namibia and Angola and of the contributions to peace in various parts of the Middle East over the years. Even in Somalia, where a political settlement proved elusive, massive famine was relieved thanks to the United Nations.

The United Nations is unique. It is called on to deal with the most intractable problems — the ones that others put into the "too hard" basket. And it works under the closest public scrutiny of Governments and the world's media.

New Zealand strongly supports practical steps to improve peace-keeping management. We have, in fact, provided additional specialist personnel to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations at our own expense. We have contributed to the strengthening of the Secretariat's capacity in the demining area. And we shall continue these commitments because we believe that they are so necessary. We also entered into the United Nations stand-by arrangements earlier this year, and we hope that these will provide a clearer focus for peace-keeping and its planning.

We have also studied with interest the Secretary-General's recommendation, in his Supplement to "An

Agenda for Peace", that the United Nations should consider the idea of a rapid-deployment force. I wish to commend the ground-breaking work that has already been done by Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark and others. My discussions yesterday with Ministers from these and other countries were encouraging to me. Progress can and should be made in this area.

At about this time last year I spoke to the General Assembly about a number of elements that I consider critical to the conduct of peace-keeping operations. These included a sustainable financial system, transparent political accountability, clear objectives, a credible legal regime that guarantees the security of United Nations personnel and, of course, the availability of resources so that objectives can be met quickly and efficiently.

Mr. Aranibar-Quiroga (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Progress has been made. We were especially pleased to see the Convention on the Safety of United Nations Personnel opened for signature during last year's session. We urge those that have not signed it to do so, and soon. We owe that to the thousands who have served, and are serving, in the United Nations operations worldwide.

The improved procedures for consultation between the Security Council and troop contributors, initiated by Argentina and New Zealand, have now been in place for almost a year. Pleasing as this is, we still have some way to go. It is up to those of us who contribute troops to United Nations operations to ensure there is no slippage in these procedures.

Regrettably, however, we do not appear to have a sustainable financial system. I am gravely concerned that, despite all the warnings here in this Assembly last year, delegations have not made any real progress in the Working Group addressing the financial crisis. The United Nations — this United Nations — ran out of cash in mid-August. The arrears of Member States in respect of the regular and peace-keeping budgets have reached unprecedented levels. It is nothing short of a tragedy that on the eve of our celebration of the fiftieth anniversary, the United Nations, this body of ours, is on the verge of bankruptcy.

At this critical point in the United Nations history, we need political will, not more words. "Words pay no debts", as Shakespeare wrote. We need new ideas, not recycled platitudes. And, above all, Members must pay their dues, on time, and in full.

We do stand here at a crossroads. In taking stock of the United Nations 50 years, we have much on which to reflect. There have been good times, and there have been bad times. Reform and revitalization must stay on our minds. I wish to assure you, Sir, and all other members, of New Zealand's commitment to help remould the Organization to that which will be needed to work for all of us as we head towards the twenty-first century.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Botswana, His Excellency the Honourable Lieutenant General Mompati Merafhe.

Mr. Merafhe (Botswana): I wish to extend to the President the sincere congratulations of my delegation on his election to the presidency of this historic session of the General Assembly. Botswana and Portugal have enjoyed the best of relations over the years. It is therefore with great pleasure that I assure him of Botswana's support and cooperation as he conducts the deliberations of this body. Let me also take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to his predecessor, my dear brother and colleague the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, for the skilful manner in which he guided the work of the forty-ninth session. His was a most successful presidency, of which, as Africans, we feel proud.

We salute our indefatigable Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and his team of dedicated staff for their selfless service to the international community at the most difficult and trying period in the history of our Organization. The Secretary-General's tenacity of purpose and his untiring efforts in the search for peace are crystallized in his comprehensive and thought-provoking report on the work of the Organization.

Five decades ago no one could have predicted with any degree of certainty the future course of events in the aftermath of the most devastating war on the face of the Earth. It was therefore a feat of wisdom and vision that the founding fathers of our Organization accomplished when they conceived and established, from the ravages of that tragic war, a global Organization that has had such a profound impact on the conduct of international relations and diplomacy. That the Charter of the United Nations has been amended only thrice in its 50 years of

existence bears testimony to their foresight and diplomatic skill.

The formation of the United Nations captured the imagination of peoples across continents, not only because its Charter promised to protect succeeding generations from the scourge of war, but also because it championed the right of the colonial countries and peoples to self-determination and independence, at a time when that was considered antagonistic to the national interests of the colonial Powers. In addition, the Organization made a commitment

> "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

This historic session of the General Assembly offers us a unique opportunity to evaluate the achievements and progress made in the fulfilment of the ideals so brilliantly and boldly expressed by the founding fathers in the Charter. It is time for introspection and reflection on the work of the Organization and a time to institute reforms, as necessary, to attune the Organization to a changed world and the challenges ahead.

It is regrettable that the military and ideological rivalry between East and West should have hamstrung the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security during the first four and half decades of its existence. Although the world was spared the possible destruction that could have been visited upon it by a third world war, the cold war led to the loss of many lives in regional conflicts across continents — on the Korean Peninsula and in Cambodia, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Vietnam and the Middle East, to mention only a few. In colonial countries, and in Africa in particular, the struggle for self-determination and national independence was perceived through the prism of super-Power rivalry, which perception resulted in bitter liberation wars.

The past five years have, however, seen the birth of a new era, an era of hope for the United Nations, characterized by general goodwill and cooperation in international relations. In other words, we are celebrating 50 years of the existence of the United Nations in a new-found atmosphere of relative peace and stability in the world. We should therefore commit and rededicate ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter as we draw the road map for the Organization in the next 50 years.

The unity and resolve of the United Nations, particularly as reflected in the facility with which, in the post-cold-war era, the Security Council takes decisions pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security, has dramatically enhanced the efficacy of the United Nations, a United Nations which has been freed from the shackles of ideological confrontation. The Security Council has indeed scored remarkable successes in the maintenance of international peace and security over the past few years. We have witnessed successes in Cambodia, Namibia, Mozambique, El Salvador and, more recently, Haiti. And this very day an agreement of great import has been signed in Washington, D.C., between Israel and the Palestinians.

This new atmosphere of international cooperation has, however, not been without problems and setbacks. The tragedies of Somalia, Sierra Leone and Liberia remain a thorn in the flesh and conscience of the international community. The internecine tribal wars in the former Yugoslavia and in the Abkhaz region of Georgia have remained intractable, and the traumatic civil wars in Afghanistan and Tajikistan continue with total abandon. These problems attest to the fact that all is not well in international affairs. The United Nations must intensify current initiatives aimed at addressing these conflicts. The international community can never be at peace when part of its body politic is being ravaged by conflict and war.

As we approach the next millennium, the responsibility falls on the generations that have benefited from 50 years of relative peace, 50 years of the United Nations, to prepare the ground for an even better Organization to serve future generations in the next 50 years and beyond. We should establish a new system of collective security in which unilateralism and the pursuance of narrow national interests for undue advantage should give way to multilateralism and collective responsibility in addressing international problems. Complex peace-keeping operations can succeed only where there is multilateral cooperation and the pursuit of policies which can yield long-term results. Concerted efforts must be made to adopt consistent criteria for the resolution of global problems.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has gained currency in recent years, and for good reason. The United Nations of 50 years ago was definitely different from the United Nations of today. The number of Member States has swelled over the years, bringing in

countries of divergent national character and historical backgrounds; and membership in the Security Council must reflect this reality. In other words, the Security Council should be a concentrated reflection of the cultural and philosophical diversity represented in the General Assembly. After all, democracy is about numbers, and the United Nations, including the Security Council, ought to be the best school for the teaching and practice of democratic principles.

We should exercise great care, however, in addressing the question of the expansion and restructuring of the Security Council, lest we create new problems in our zeal to solve old ones. We should guard against the Security Council's remaining or becoming an exclusive club for the pursuance of the policies and strategic national interests of the rich and powerful nations. At the same time, we should avoid making the Security Council a big and unwieldy enterprise which would crumble under its own weight. We should strike the right balance between equitable representation and efficiency and effectiveness.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly shows that peace-keeping operations are very expensive. Over the past five years the budget of United Nations peace-keeping operations has grown from an annual figure of approximately $600 million to a staggering projection of $3.6 billion by the end of this year. The United Nations cannot hope to sustain this kind of budgetary escalation.

Greater attention must be given to preventive action. Here we agree entirely with the Secretary-General when he states in the "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" that

> "It is evidently better to prevent conflicts through early warning, quiet diplomacy and ... preventive deployment". *(A/50/60/para. 26)*

A multifaceted approach is required to develop a capability, including substantial human and material resources, that would enable regional organizations to detect potential conflict situations and prevent them from breaking out.

In this context, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution was established in response to the many challenges facing the African continent in the field of peace-keeping. It is an expression of Africa's readiness to take effective measures aimed at solving conflicts within the continent. We welcome the support of the Member States, international organizations and individuals that have generously made resources available to the OAU Mechanism, and we urge the international community to make similar contributions.

We also welcome the conclusions of a series of conferences on conflict prevention and peace-keeping in Africa sponsored by the British Government, the latest of which was held in Gaborone, the capital of my country, on 7 and 8 August 1995. Botswana is convinced that training, planning and preparation, an effective early-warning system and logistic support are fundamental to the OAU's capacity to predict and defuse conflicts and, once they have erupted, to undertake peace-keeping operations. The financial support of the international community is crucial if the peace-keeping capability of the African countries is to be realized.

The United Nations, in general, should be placed on a firm financial foundation if it is effectively to tackle the mammoth tasks facing the world today, including assistance to regional arrangements in conflict prevention and peace-keeping. The question of the financial emergency in which the United Nations so often finds itself, because of failure by Member States to honour their financial obligations to the Organization, should not be allowed to fester into the next century. It seems logical, at least to Botswana, that the decisions and resolutions which we adopt as Member States, and which have financial implications, should be accompanied by a commitment to make prompt and regular contributions to the various budgets, programmes and funds of the Organization. Otherwise there is no sense in adopting such decisions and resolutions. As stated earlier, the resources needed for peace-keeping operations alone are such that every Member State must make its contribution if we seriously expect results from the Organization.

We cannot talk about the maintenance of international peace and security without reference to nuclear proliferation, because of all weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to international peace and security. In this regard, Botswana is satisfied with the outcome of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The States Parties not only agreed to extend the Treaty indefinitely, but also adopted the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and committed themselves to strengthening the review process for the Treaty. We were disappointed that some nuclear Powers resumed testing immediately after the conclusion of the Conference.

The States Parties further committed themselves to complete negotiations, no later than 1996, on a universal, legally binding and internationally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. The onus now rests on nuclear-weapon States to honour their end of the deal. My delegation firmly believes that the only way to protect the world from the scourge of nuclear weapons is through their complete elimination.

The contribution made by the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the field of health, especially in the developing countries, has been most impressive. Life-threatening diseases such as polio, tuberculosis, smallpox, malaria and river blindness, to name but a few, have largely been eradicated in most parts of the world. The other visible benefit of the work of the United Nations in development has been the transfer of technology, especially to the developing countries, resulting in improved sanitation, education, human resource development and food production and storage.

Currently, the United Nations is spending millions of dollars on research and related expenditure on the AIDS pandemic, which is threatening the very existence of humankind and is posing a serious threat to the economic development of many nations. It is our sincere hope that the world will quickly find a cure to save humankind from the scourge of this pandemic.

We are concerned that in recent years the resources available to some specialized agencies of the United Nations have been declining. This has negatively affected their contribution to economic development in the developing countries. It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have been decreasing since 1992, and this has resulted in national indicative planning figures in developing countries being reduced by 30 per cent from their original levels. This is an unfortunate trend indeed for developing countries, considering that the UNDP is the agency of the United Nations charged with responsibility for the financing and coordination of technical and development assistance. And the negative impact this trend has had in the execution of development projects and programmes in the developing countries cannot be overemphasized.

It is imperative that the ongoing dialogue on the reform of the United Nations give due consideration to the important role that these agencies and programmes play in the improvement in the living standards of peoples in the developing countries. The reduction of the administrative costs and the rationalization of the operations of these organizations should be carried out at the expense neither of their capacity to deliver the goods and services nor of the quality of their product. In this regard, I wish to reaffirm the decision the African Ministers of Industry took in Gaborone, Botswana, on 8 June 1995, in which they appealed to the international community, particularly the developed countries, to support the maintenance and strengthening of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to enable it to continue participating actively in the industrialization of Africa.

The past five years have witnessed major developments in the social and economic fields. The international community has made great efforts in addressing issues of international concern in these areas. In this regard, the successful holding of the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the World Summit for Social Development and, most recently, the Fourth World Conference on Women are illustrative. While the holding of these conferences in itself deserves commendation, the international community should not be satisfied merely with summitry. It should strive to adopt declarations and plans of action which are realistic and implementable. Above all, there should be a genuine commitment to providing the necessary resources for the implementation of these declarations and plans of action.

It is now four years since the General Assembly, in recognition of the difficult social and economic situation prevailing in Africa, adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa. At its high-level-segment meeting held in Geneva from 3 to 6 July this year, the Economic and Social Council concluded that progress in the implementation of the New Agenda had been slow and insufficient, and reaffirmed that success depended on the full support of the international community. It is clear that while the primary responsibility for economic development in Africa rests with the African Governments and peoples themselves, there is still an absolute need for the support of the international community.

One of the priority areas of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa is regional cooperation and integration. In this connection, we in southern Africa are engaged in efforts to ensure development through regional cooperation. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), after 10 years

of rehabilitating and developing infrastructure, has embarked on closer cooperation and integration aimed at, *inter alia*, free movement of goods, capital, services and people.

One of the recent major developments in the building of the community was the accession of the Republic of Mauritius to SADC at the organization's summit in August 1995 in Johannesburg, South Africa, thereby bringing the membership of SADC to 12. We are aware that we have set ourselves a difficult task as a region, but there is no alternative to this path of collective self-reliance if our region is to survive in the current competitive international economic environment. We therefore call upon the international community to continue its support for SADC and its programme of action.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate that this historic session of the General Assembly offers us an opportunity to evaluate the achievements, review the lessons of the past and chart a course for the future of our Organization. An important component of this introspection and reflection on the work of the United Nations should be the improvement of public awareness of the United Nations, building a wider constituency and demonstrating that the Organization will continue to be relevant in the years to come.

The Acting President: *(interpretation from Spanish):* We have just heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

Several representatives wish to make statements in right of reply, and I shall call on them.

Before I do so, may I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): The British Government, as members of the General Assembly will be aware, is working closely with the Government of Ireland to advance the peace process in Northern Ireland. I would just like briefly to set out the British Government's position on one aspect of the negotiations to which the Foreign Minister of Ireland referred in his remarks yesterday, namely the decommissioning of weapons by the parties to the dialogue.

The British and Irish Governments share the aim of moving to all-party talks in Northern Ireland as a basis for a lasting political settlement. In the Joint Declaration of December 1993, our Governments affirmed that the

> "democratically mandated parties which establish a commitment to exclusively peaceful methods and which have shown that they abide by the democratic process, are free to participate fully in democratic politics, and to join in dialogue in due course."

In a speech to the Irish Parliament in December 1993, the Irish Foreign Minister said:

> "Questions were raised on how to determine a permanent cessation of violence. We are talking about handing up of arms and are insisting that it would not be simply a temporary cessation of violence to see what the political process offers. There can be no equivocation in relation to the determination of both Governments in that respect."

Both those statements reflect the approach of my Government to this issue. Specifically, we believe that there should be some actual decommissioning of arms as a tangible confidence-building measure, and to signal the start of a process.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (People's Democratic Republic of Korea): I am going to speak in exercise of the right of reply to what the South Korean Foreign Minister said this morning.

We know a bit about the gentleman from Seoul. But this morning we were surprised at how brazen-faced he was and at his ignorance of politics. Judging that the people of the world do not know the realities on the Korean peninsula, he attempted to hurl mud at us and mislead the world public.

From his statement today, we could see vividly the true colours of a politician from a colonial country. I am going to refute, point by point, what he said about us.

First, we reject his allegations relating to human rights issues in our country. The problem lies with the South Korean authorities. We thought that Mr. Mandela, now the President of South Africa, was the person who had served the longest term in prison; but in South Korea there are still several dozen prisoners who have served more than 40 years in prison because they refused to be converted.

Mr. Gong talked about separated families and the opening up of our society. These are precisely matters that we wanted to ask the South Korean authorities about, these authorities that are wielding the National Security Law over the people to suppress their ardent aspirations to the reunification of the country. The National Security Law prohibits the South Korean people from meeting their compatriots from the North, exchanging letters and even communicating by telephone with the people of the North.

South Korea is the only country in the world that by law forbids people to meet and exchange letters and telephone calls. Those who violate the law are put behind bars. Only one month ago, South Korean rulers arrested and jailed Mrs. Pakyong Gil, the 70-year-old wife of Reverend Mun i Khoan for the crime, under the National Security Law, of visiting Pyongyang.

South Korean rulers have built a concrete wall along the military demarcation line to block traffic between the North and the South. In these circumstances, it is impossible to imagine that separated families could meet.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the world community to exert its influence over the South Korean authorities to abolish the inhumane and unethical National Security Law and to break down the concrete wall so that separated families can meet.

As to the nuclear issue, this originated with the United States. South Korean authorities committed a crime by asking for a nuclear umbrella from outside forces. The problem here is that South Korea has no say at all on the nuclear issue. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States have the authority to solve this problem. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States have already agreed to settle this issue. Therefore, South Korean authorities have nothing to do but sit and see what we are doing.

The Armistice Agreement was signed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. South Korea opposed the Armistice Agreement. Today, the armistice mechanism does not work, as the United States has systematically destroyed it. It now only serves as a camouflage for the foreign occupation of South Korea. In these circumstances, we propose to the United States side that talks be held to establish a new peace mechanism. South Korea has no place to turn because it is not a real party to the Armistice Agreement. If South Korea is really concerned about peace on the Korean peninsula, it would do better to sit quietly and watch what is going on between the DPRK and the United States.

As for the talks between the North and the South, how can we think of sitting at a table with those who have tried their utmost, even during this session, to slander the dialogue partner? If South Korean authorities really want talks with us, they should begin by apologizing before the nation for their unethical acts last year, when the people of the North were grieving over the death of their fatherly leader, President Kim Il Sung, and at least show sincerity by repealing the National Security Law and breaking down the concrete wall.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): Several delegations today once again brought up the question of nuclear tests. Some made an effort to weigh their words carefully, but others did not show the same restraint.

The delegation of France wishes to emphasize once again that the judgements levelled in this fashion are not an objective assessment of the facts. Let me recall that France's conclusion of the current programme must be seen for what it is. This is the conclusion of a series limited to eight tests at the most, and it will be completed before the end of May 1996.

Our objective remains the achievement next year of the conclusion of a truly meaningful ban, one which will prohibit all nuclear-weapon testing and all other nuclear explosions. In this regard, we can only applaud the fact that several delegations expressed approval of this fundamental objective and of my country's commitment to this option — the first country to make such a commitment.

Let me repeat that our programme to complete our tests does not endanger the environment, as several distinguished scientists have amply demonstrated. The programme is in accordance with law and with the commitments entered into by France — for extreme restraint is not the same thing as prohibition.

Finally, this programme makes it possible for France resolutely to argue the case for the most satisfactory and the most rigorous option with regard to the scope of the test-ban treaty.

I wish also to recall that a member of the French Government recently held frank and positive talks with

representatives of the South Pacific Forum and assured them of France's determination to maintain and develop its cooperation with the States members of the Forum.

Mr. Guillen (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In his statement to the General Assembly this afternoon, Mr. Galo Leoro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, referred to incidents that had taken place between our two countries at the beginning of the year and to the continuing differences between us in our bilateral relations. In this regard, the delegation of Peru would like to make the following points.

In his statement, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador failed to explain that the Protocol of Peace, Friendship and Limits signed on 29 January 1942 by Peru and Ecuador is the international treaty that set the definitive frontier between our two countries and that the arbitral ruling made by Captain Bras Días de Aguiar of Brazil on 15 July 1945 resolved the disagreements on the demarcation of the frontier, which had already been delineated.

Peru denies the existence of a territorial problem with Ecuador, because, in accordance with international law, the Rio de Janeiro Protocol of 1942 established an internationally recognized border, with a commitment by four countries — Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States of America — to ensure it.

A clear distinction must be drawn between a border — which in this case has already been established and internationally recognized — and its demarcation, which is its implementation on the ground. Peru recognizes that certain sections of the common border still have not been demarcated, and achieving that demarcation is the very purpose of point 6 of the Paz de Itamaratí Declaration, of February of this year.

Peru, in a timely manner, informed the United Nations Security Council of the unexpected onset of armed conflict in January of this year. At this time, we are determined to resolve, within the legal framework that established our border, the differences we have with Ecuador.

Mr. Leoro Franco (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Its significance notwithstanding, the very existence of the Rio de Janeiro Protocol implies that a vast area has still to be delimited: an area of the *divortium aquarium* Santiago Zamora, which, geographically speaking, does not exist; therefore this question has no solution. The Dias de Aguiar verdict was reached in 1945, before this problem came up, which was in 1947. That problem, therefore, still remains. We referred to the representatives of the guarantor countries because of their participation in the recent events that have helped actively in the easing of this conflict.

For that very reason, we cannot but reiterate what I said in my earlier statement, namely that although it implies serious differences between the two countries, they are differences that do exist, and continue to exist, in accordance with the point 6 of the Declaration of Itamartí.

Mr. Kyu Hyung Lee (Republic of Korea): It is with great reluctance that I have chosen to intervene, owing to the distortions in the statement about the Republic of Korea and the allegations made against it. Although I can afford to dismiss the statement of the representative in question, I feel bound to make the following point for the benefit of the representatives gathered in this Hall.

With regard to the nuclear question, my delegation would like to draw the attention of the representative to the fact that last Friday, 22 September, in Vienna, the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted one more resolution, by a vote of 74 to none, on North Korea's non-compliance with the IAEA safeguards agreement. It is our sincere hope that North Korea will abide by its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and under the safeguards agreement that it concluded with the IAEA.

At the same time, my delegation urges North Korea once again to come forward to hold a dialogue with the South for the prompt implementation of the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The protection of human rights has been, and continues to be, a top priority on my Government's agenda. Since the inauguration of the civilian government in 1993, in particular, a number of reform measures have been taken to enhance human rights in my country. The record of the protection and improvement of human rights in the Republic of Korea is well documented in many authoritative reports and studies, including those by major human rights watchdog organizations around the globe, and is also reflected in our continued membership in the Commission on Human Rights.

Therefore, North Korea's attempt to denigrate the good name of Korea in the realm of human rights can only be scoffed at by the international community. I believe that the North Korean delegation has chosen the wrong subject, at the wrong time, in the wrong place, because the United Nations is a forum in which lies and distortions of the facts can be detected easily. Many representatives have been to my country and have seen for themselves how fully-fledged democracy has blossomed there.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to cite briefly the June 1994 report of Amnesty International on the status of political prisoners in North Korea. A particularly alarming fact in the report was the disclosure of the names of a large number of political prisoners who are kept in detention centres across the country. It is believed that thousands of prisoners are detained in numerous concentration camps across North Korea and that over 430 South Koreans have been taken against their will to the North since the end of the Korean war.

According to an annual report on human rights by an authoritative organization,

> "the North Korean regime subjects its citizens to rigid control and establishes security ratings for each individual, which determines access to employment, schools, medical facilities and certain stores, as well as admission to the Korean Working Party. The regime permits no independent press or associations, and little outside information reaches the public, except that approved and disseminated by the Government".

Another striking piece of evidence of the miserable human rights situation in North Korea is the fact that over the course of one year, the number of defectors to my country from the North Korean lumber camps in Siberia has reached almost 60. If the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is truly, as it has claimed, a

> "State where human rights are respected and surely guaranteed",

my delegation urges it to open its society and allow the international community to see firsthand the current state of its human rights situation. Moreover, we ask that detainees and individuals who have been separated from their families be allowed at least to communicate with their families and loved ones.

Lastly, I will dismiss all other statements by North Korea, because we all know that, regardless of the unreasonable arguments they advance or any further attempts to mislead the international community, the Republic of Korea is a success in terms of democratization and economic prosperity, in which all Korean people can take pride.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: For the second time, and recalling that there is a five-minute limit on such statements, I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, it seems to me that the representative of South Korea is very ignorant of the issues on the Korean peninsula. I advise him to study very carefully and deeply the agreed framework between the DPRK and the United States, because no resolution of the Korean nuclear issue can be justified if this agreed framework does not implement it.

Secondly, only one month ago, in South Korea, a long-term prisoner was set free. He served 43 years in prison. I am also very surprised that the representative of South Korea was not proud of his National Security Law. He never mentioned the National Security Law, or what it really means to the Korean people.

We also want to ask the South Korean representative about his remarks just now concerning the Amnesty International. Who gave the data to Amnesty International to slander our country? It was the South Korean authorities.

We therefore reject all the allegations of the South Korean representative. I once again advise him to better acquaint himself with the situation in his own country, and what the National Security Law really means to our nation.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: For the second time, I now call on the representative of Peru.

Mr. Guillen (Peru) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I shall be very brief at this stage in the debate.

It is important for the General Assembly to have the following clarification.

The accords which may exist in terms of demarcation between Peru and Ecuador were in due course submitted to arbitration agreed upon by both countries. The arbitration took place within the framework of the treaty guaranteed by four countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States, and it was accepted by both parties.

Ecuador continued to implement the demarcation thus established for a considerable period of time, even mentioning the arbitration I have referred to.

Peru believes that it is important to acknowledge that the Protocol of Rio de Janeiro of 1942, as well as the arbitration I have mentioned, are part and parcel of binding international law.

Peru is firmly committed to continue, in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Hamaraty Peace Declaration of January 1995, to try to find a final solution in the light of the above-mentioned international instruments agreed to by the parties and internationally recognized.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish):* For the second time, I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador.

Mr. Leoro Franco (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish):* It is clear that what the Ambassador of Peru has just said refers to a case in which there was a judgement in 1945. But it is clear from a map prepared by the aerial mapping service of the United States for a commission at the time that no such geographical element as the *divortium aquarium* between the Santiago and Zamora rivers appears.

It actually appeared only in 1947, so it is hardly possible that it could have been resolved by a judgement dated 1945. The events of 1947 led the Government of Ecuador to ask the guarantor countries of the Protocol to invite Peru for a joint inquiry in order to remove doubts about the geographical situation. The invitation was extended again in 1956 but was not accepted by Peru then, nor has it been accepted since.

In the Hamaraty Peace Declaration, paragraph 6, can be found mention of "unresolved matters". Some are related to demarcation, and others refer to delimitation, and there is no doubt about these issues whatsoever.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Spanish):* For the second time, I now call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Lee Kyu Hyung (Republic of Korea): It is with the deepest regret that I speak again in order to reply to yet another unreasonable statement made by the North Korean delegation.

I will be brief in my remarks concerning the National Security Law.

The position of my Government with regard to the National Security Law has been fully expressed several times, including at the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

The situation in the Korean peninsula has remained as the last legacy of the cold war, and requires our sensitivity and patience. Although it is the wish of the Korean people for the improvement of the political situation so that some provisions of the Law would no longer be necessary, a national consensus was reached to maintain the Law to sustain peace, freedom, democracy and human rights in our country.

The National Security Law will be abolished as soon as North Korea renounces its policy of aggression.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.